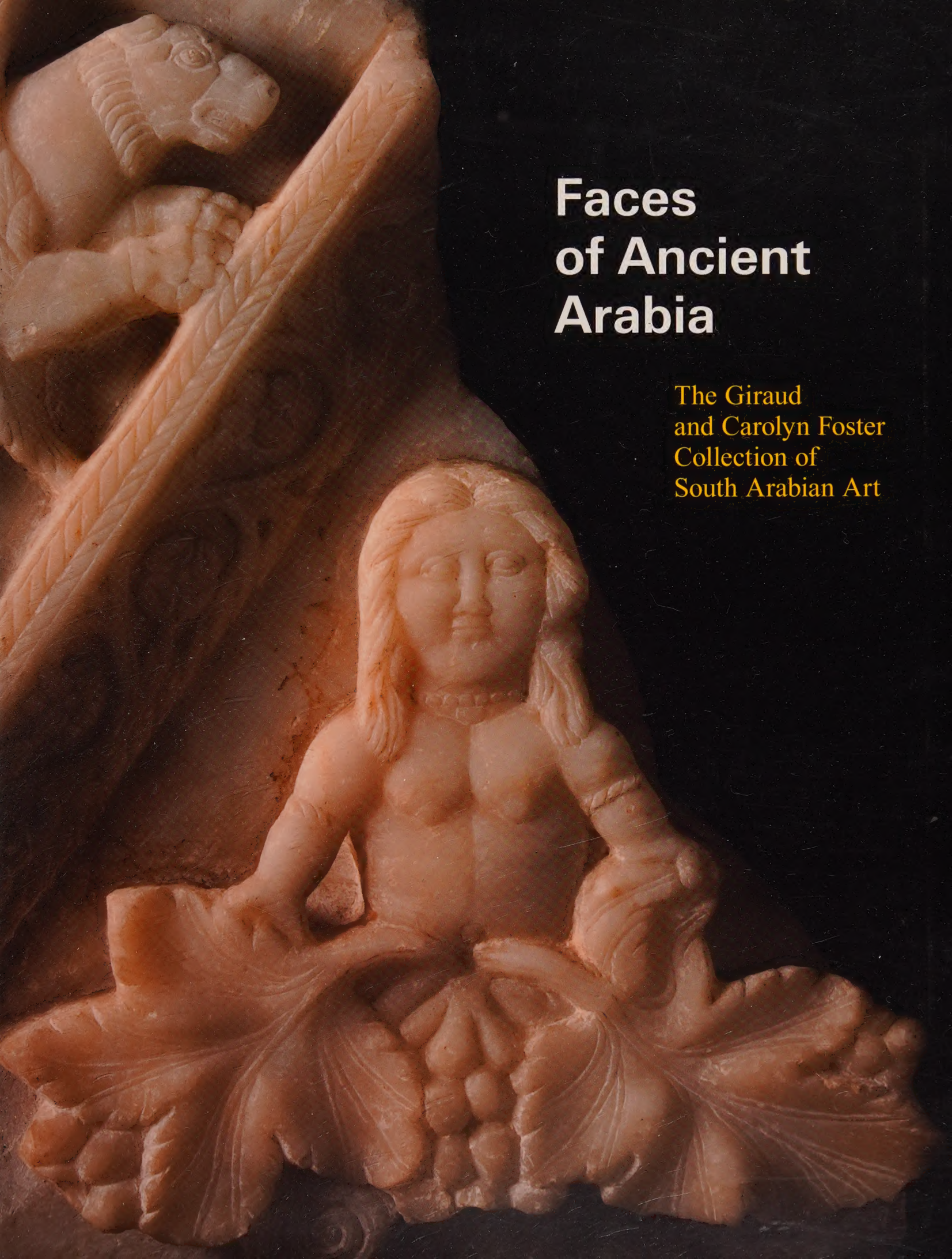
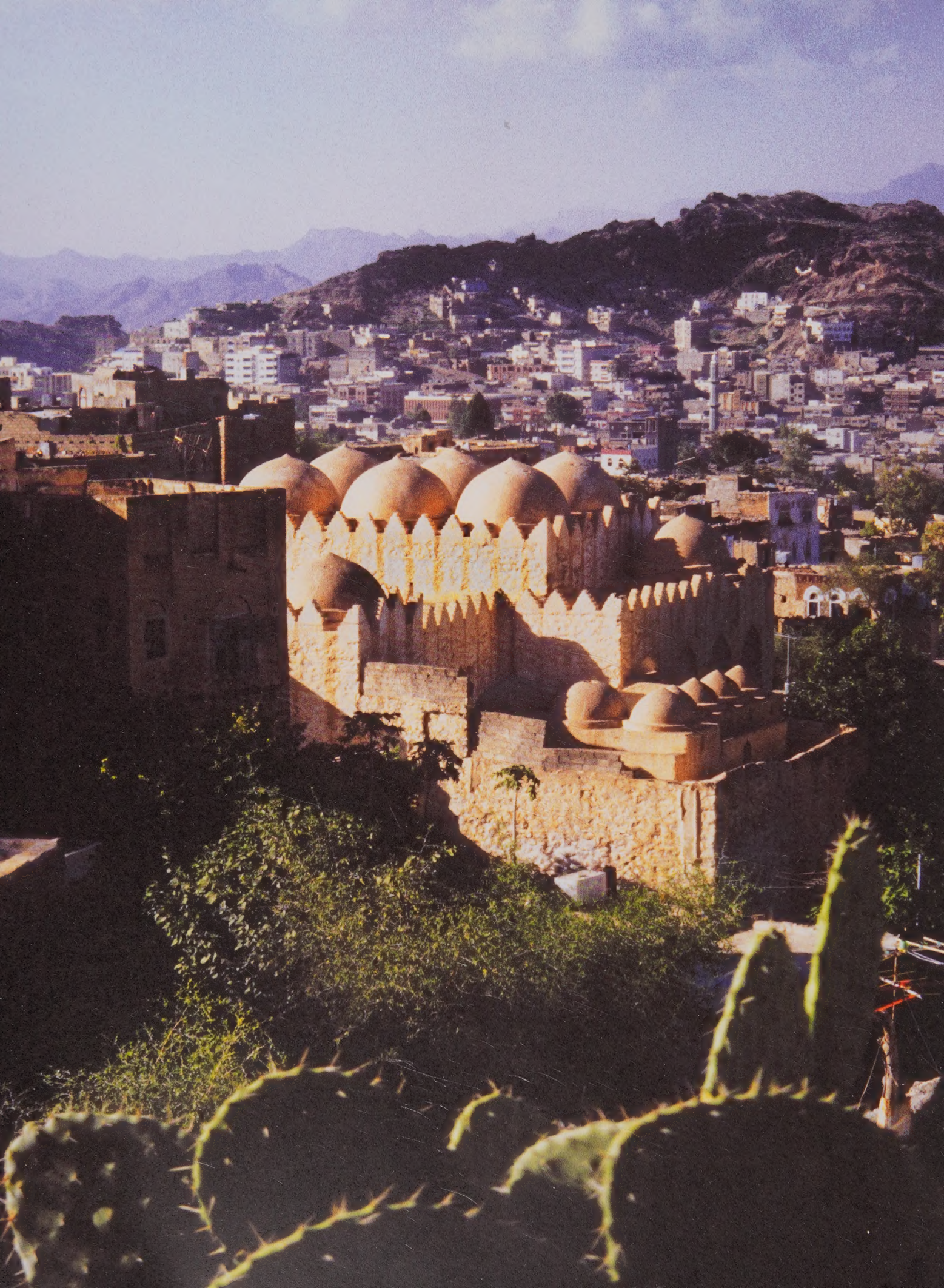
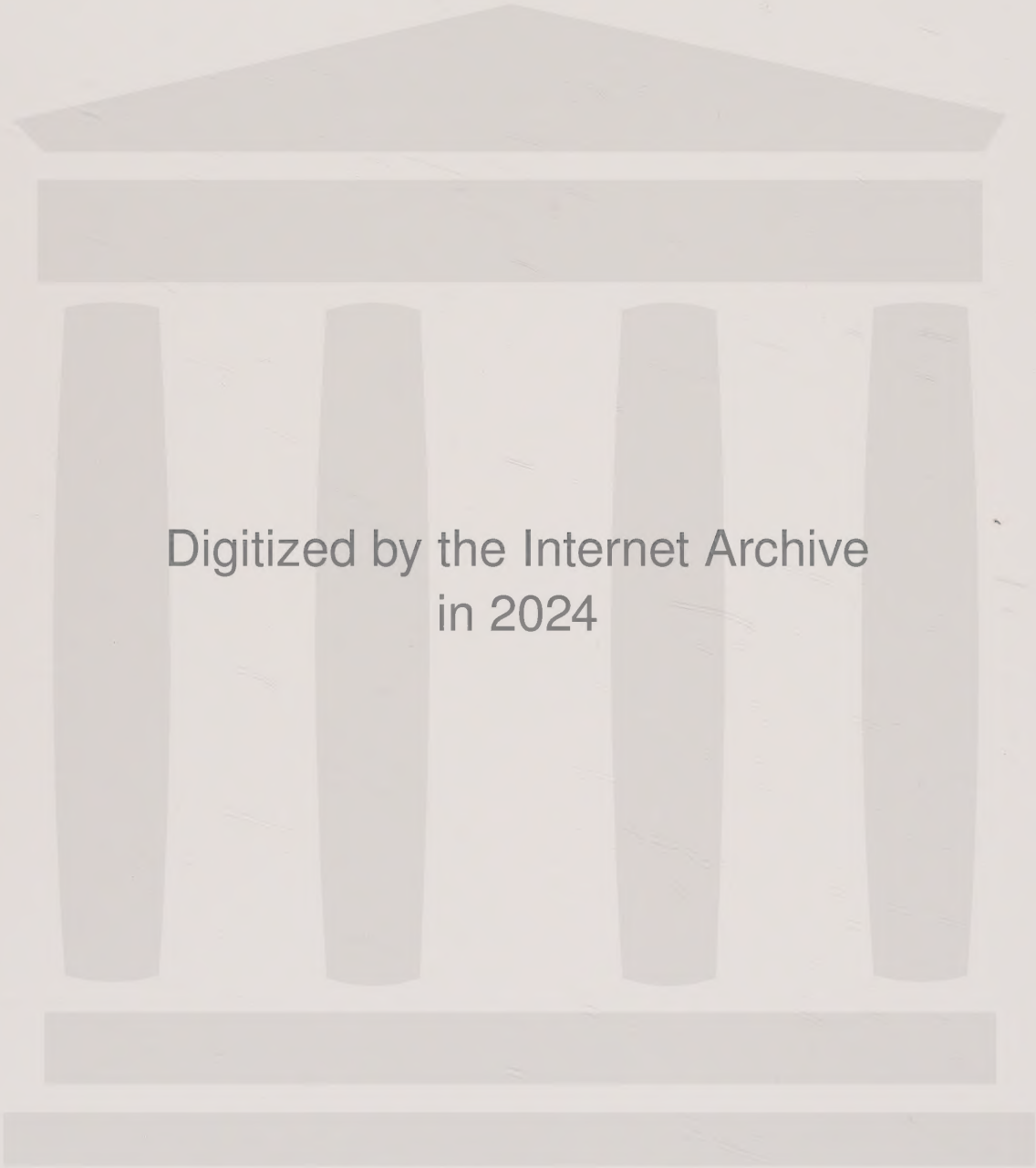


Faces of Ancient Arabia

The Giraud and Carolyn Foster Collection of South Arabian Art



Faces of Ancient Arabia:
The Giraud and Carolyn Foster Collection
of South Arabian Art


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

https://archive.org/details/facesofancientar0000walt

Faces of Ancient Arabia:
The Giraud and Carolyn Foster Collection
of South Arabian Art

Regine Schulz and Giraud V. Foster, Editors

Man and Lion Press and Walters Art Museum
Baltimore, Maryland

Front cover:
Plate 30. Fragment of a Pediment with Goddess
Photo: N. Barker, Baltimore MD

Back cover:
Plate 28. Stela with Representation of a Seated Woman
Photo: N. Barker, Baltimore MD

Front end leaves:
Palace Wādī Dar / Photo: D. Noack, Bad Endorf, Germany
Terrace cultivation / Photo: R. Schulz, Baltimore MD
Ta'izz / Photo: R. Schulz, Baltimore MD

Back end leaves:
Shībām / Photo: U. Roessing, Hamm, Germany
Ta'izz / Photo: R. Schulz, Baltimore MD
Mārib old town / Photo: R. Schulz, Baltimore MD

Copyright © 2008 by Giraud Foster and Regine Schulz

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the publisher.

First Edition
ISBN 0-9747356-2-0

Published by Man and Lion Press, Baltimore MD

Designed by Nathan Garland, New Haven CT
Printed by Finlay, Bloomfield CT
Collection photos by Norman Barker, Baltimore MD

Contents

6	Acknowledgements	
7	Foreword	
	Essays:	
8	The Collection: A Personal History	Giraud V. Foster
18	History of Ancient South Arabia	Regine Schulz
24	Who Is the Queen of Sheba?	Robert Steven Bianchi
30	The Incense Road	Antonietta Catanzeriti
34	Religious Art and Architecture	Regine Schulz
	The Collection:	
40	Photographs	
102	Catalog	Regine Schulz
128	Bibliography	
	Appendices:	Regine Schulz
132	The Dromedary	
133	The Dam —The Wonder of Mārib	
134	Tower-Houses	
135	Script and Language of Ancient South Arabia	
136	South Arabian Funerary Heads	
138	Chronology Chart	

Acknowledgements

Without the help and special expertise of many people, this publication would never have been possible. We extend our heartfelt thanks not only to the contributing authors, who are acknowledged elsewhere, but also to the following: Dr. Gary Vikan, Director of the Walters Art Museum (Baltimore), for his vision and promotion of the exhibit *The Faces of Ancient Arabia* and for his continuing support of all aspects of this project; Dr. Robert Steven Bianchi (Tampa) for his research activities and descriptions that contribute so much to the catalog; Antonietta Catanzeriti (Venice) for research assistance; and Dr. Kenneth A. Kitchen (Liverpool), one of the few recognized experts in the field of South Arabian languages, who translated the inscriptions in the collection and gave us his thoughtful comments.

In the preparation of visual images we are indebted to Norman Barker, Director of the Department of Photography at the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, who photographed all the objects in the present collection and readied the images for publication; Dr. Regine Schulz, Curator of Ancient Art and Director of International Curatorial Relations at the Walters Museum of Art, Ursula Roessing (Hamm, Germany), and Dr. Detlef Noack (Bad Endorf, Germany), who along with Dr. Schulz gave us permission to publish their personal photographs of the Yemen.

Finally, we acknowledge and thank all those who made substantive contributions to the mechanics of this book's production. These include Louise Cornell for typing the many drafts of the manuscript; Dr. Diane Fetter, Jeremy Pope, Charles Dibble, Dr. Mattias Seidel, Stepahnie Shapiro, and Mary Butler Davies for proofreading; Jeffrey Schier, manuscript editor for Yale University Press, for editing the final copy; Nathan Garland for designing the book; and David Lorczak of Finlay for printing it.

Giraud Foster and Regine Schulz

Foreword

I first met Giraud Foster at an elegant dinner party at the home of John and Berthe Ford, and casually mentioned a movie that I had recently seen and enjoyed—a 1984 thriller by Brian De Palma called *Body Double*. Some months later Giraud sought me out at another social event. Why? Because he had by then seen and studied the entire De Palma oeuvre and, mistakenly assuming that I had done the same, eagerly waded into a detailed discussion of each film.

This was my first glimpse into the mind of a man whose interests, intellect, and passions are as wide-ranging as any I've ever encountered. And it was only the beginning. Some years later I was enjoying a compelling exhibition at a local gallery entitled "Festival of Lights: Photographs of India at Night," by . . . Giraud Foster! Could this be the same man, the one who in casual conversation evokes intimate knowledge of the royal family of Yemen, the tribal cultures of New Guinea, rhododendron species of Bhutan, and the archaeology of Cyprus? The well-published Ph.D. who is variously identified as a physician, a biochemist, a world-roaming researcher, an archaeologist, and a photographer? Yes, it is, and amazingly Giraud conveys this exotic richness of experience and achievement with such self-effacing candor that one might wonder if this is indeed a single person and a single lifetime.

How to distill it all? This rich mosaic that is Giraud V. Foster finally came fully into focus for me when I visited the wonderful home that he and Carolyn have shared in north Baltimore for decades. For their home, like the man, is truly a "Cabinet of Wonders." The superb collection of South Arabian art that is the subject of this volume is a stunning discovery in a private home, but, for the Fosters, that's just the beginning. One's attention is drawn, in a rapid succession, from a Romanian back-painted glass icon to a small marble head from late-antique Asia Minor, to tribal works from Sub-Saharan Africa and New Guinea, to Indian miniature paintings on the walls leading to the second floor—to meteorites, dazzlingly beautiful fossils, and to what Giraud playfully identifies as the fossilized dung of a dinosaur. And as would be expected, the walls of the Foster home are lined with a library every bit as rich and varied as the collections.

The pleasure of my long friendship with Carolyn and Giraud Foster took an unanticipated but wonderful turn in the summer of 2006, when I received a short, elegant communication under the letterhead of Giraud V. Foster. It was his commitment to gift the South Arabian pieces in his home to the Walters Art Museum. Long before I met the Fosters, I had known and admired the exotic, strangely modern-looking alabaster sculpture of late Hellenistic and Roman-period South Arabia, but I could never have guessed that as director of the Walters I would someday welcome into the museum's renowned ancient galleries a category of art virtually unknown to Henry Walters and his generation. Not, that is, until that letter arrived. And for that, Giraud and Carolyn, I thank you, on behalf of the Walters, and of the generations of museum-goers in years to come who, thanks to you, will pay an aesthetic and intellectual visit to an exotic land they will likely never encounter in person.

Gary Vikan
Director, Walters Art Museum

The Collection: A Personal History

Giraud V. Foster

My story is about how my interest in South Arabia developed, how archaeology became a passion, and how the collection that is being gifted to the Walters Art Museum came to be. It starts with a telephone call on a fall afternoon in 1961, when I was a young postdoctoral scientist in a research laboratory at the Johns Hopkins Medical School. Dr. Ted Woodward, my former Chief of Medicine during medical school, was calling to let me know that his brother, then Director of the Department of State's Medical Service Division, was looking for someone to be the personal physician to Imam Ahmed ibn Yahya, King of Yemen, and would I like the job. I asked for a day or two to think about it, and my wife and I proceeded to read everything about the Yemen we could lay our hands on. We decided without hesitation that this was an experience that we could not turn down.

In the ensuing weeks I sought out anyone who had been to the Yemen. I introduced myself to Professor William Foxwell Albright, who not only was America's foremost Near Eastern archaeologist, but he had been the senior archaeologist on the only archaeological mission to the Yemen. We met three or four times for lunch at the Hopkins Faculty Club, where we were usually joined by some of his colleagues. I always came away from these luncheons with the titles of more books and articles to read. His enthusiasm and excitement about what I might see and do in the Yemen were wonderfully infectious. I also introduced myself to two former ambassadors to Saudi Arabia—who had also been accredited as ambassadors to Yemen—and they educated me about the political situation. The recent confederation of Yemen, Egypt, and Syria as the United Arab Republic had just broken apart. For the first time in recent history more than a hundred foreigners were in the country, as Americans and Chinese had been contracted to build roads. And some geologists were speculating that Yemen might have oil.

My departure to Arabia was bittersweet. After my research colleagues had given me a memorable farewell party that featured a banner wryly announcing, "King die, you die," I found myself saying a temporary goodbye to my wife, who remained behind to sell a house and two cars, put

Imam Ahmed in his Palace in Ta'izz. He became the king of Yemen in 1948, after his father Yahya was assassinated by political opponents in Ṣana'ā'. Official photo of the king, gift of one of the king's ministers to Dr. Foster.

all our worldly possessions in storage, take two children out of school, and pack eleven trunks for the trip. Meanwhile, there was another matter to address: I was told that I should bring the king a gift. When I asked for suggestions, I was told that someone else had given him tropical fish and that this had been a great hit. Not to be outdone, I found four "hairless waltzing mice" in a local pet store. These were mice bred with a neurological defect that produced trembling and caused them to run in circles when excited. I purchased and gilded a hamster cage with a running wheel and wired potatoes to its sides for food for the five-day trip. Arriving in Rome, I found my small charges in acute respiratory distress, so I whisked them to a hospital emergency room, where no less than five doctors involved themselves in their care. The mice were x-rayed, found to have pneumonia, were treated with massive doses of penicillin, and promptly died. Luckily I had brought a Polaroid camera as a backup gift for the king.

The stop in Cairo was equally eventful. I had booked in a hotel where the State Department assured me every room was electronically bugged. I quickly found two receivers: one behind my bed's headboard and another behind a picture. They were cute little things. I "neutered" them and later had them made into cuff links. My last stop was Asmara, now in Somalia but then in Ethiopia. Here I met Matt Looram, who then was U.S. consul in Ethiopia and who was to become a great friend and my main link with the outside world for the next year. In those days a U.S. Army base in Asmara maintained radio surveillance over the Middle East and much of what was then the Soviet Union. The base was supported by an army hospital that became my future source for medical supplies. Asmara was then a sleepy little town that still preserved its Italian charm from when Mussolini occupied Ethiopia during the 1930s. Little did I know that it would become home to my family during the revolution that would climax our adventure in Yemen.

The following day I flew to Aden, a city the British vacated some years after the fall of Singapore. There I was met by a jeep from the American legation and driven for four hours over rough, unpaved mountain roads to Ta'izz, where the king resided. Excepting the hot desert of the Empty Quarter to the north and the coast of the Tihāma to the west along the Red Sea, most of Yemen is at an altitude of three to five thousand feet and enjoys a salubrious climate not unlike Mexico City. Although Ṣana'ā' is its principal city, the king's presence in Ta'izz, a town of some ten thousand inhabitants, made it the *de facto* capital of the country. Except for a quarter-mile stretch, its streets were unpaved. It was in every way a medieval Arabian city with encircling walls, mosques, and *suqs* (markets). Its only touch of modernity was a generator that thumped noisily day and night to generate electricity for the local hospital and most of the foreign community. The latter consisted of three or four dozen people, most of whom were diplomats, doctors, U.S. government agency representatives, and road construction experts. Both the United States and China were then building roads to al-Mukhā and Ṣana'ā', respectively, and each country had an additional fifty or more nationals working in rural areas. Seemingly out of place were the two dozen or more motor vehicles that the Americans had imported to support the legation and their road project. These were, however, greatly outnumbered by camels.

For the three months that I waited for the completion of my house and the arrival of my wife and children, I was a guest of Robert Stookey, the chargé d'affaires at the American legation, and his wife, Louise. It was in their home, during surreal evenings seasoned with martinis and peanuts, that I learned more specifically what my job would entail. I was to attend to the king eight hours a day at the palace—or *magam,* as it was called locally—and every third night as well. The king's previous doctor had been a Russian, and in the months before my arrival my place had been temporarily filled by an army surgeon. The year before, the king had been shot by a would-be assassin, and one of the bullets that struck him lodged in his left arm, where it encroached on a nerve to cause him pain. He had gone to Rome for medical attention but ultimately elected not to have the bullet removed. It was at this time that he was introduced to morphine, a habit that was later promoted by one of his wives. One of my tasks

would be to help him with his addiction as well as give him occasional local anesthesia to relieve his discomfort caused by the bullet. In addition, the king had another medical problem as a consequence of his recent marriage to a thirteen-year-old girl. She was the daughter of an important tribal chieftain who, rumor had it, might raid Ta'izz were anything remiss to happen to her—including failure by the king, who was in his late sixties or early seventies, to fulfill his marital obligations. A third problem was that he was grossly overweight—he was estimated to weigh over three hundred pounds—and was reported to have dangerously high blood pressure. I was instructed that it was in the best interests of America to see that the king survive into old age (this was 1962, when oil had still to be discovered in the Yemen). While my duties appeared to be clear cut, I was soon to learn this was anything but true.

From the moment we met, the king and I enjoyed each other's company and were solicitous of each other's well-being. Physically he indeed was enormous; he never stood, and he never left his room. He slept and ran the country from his mattress on the floor in the center of a large, plainly furnished, second-floor room in the palace. Sometimes he would be fully lying down, more often he was propped up against pillows, and on occasion he would sit nearly upright with his legs partially crossed. To his left were windows from which he could view the courtyard and everyone who entered or left the palace. In addition, he had large mirrors on the wall both in front of and behind him so that no one could enter or leave the room without being seen. His face was incredibly expressive. He had bulging eyes, and it was said that he had had a string tied tightly around his neck when he was young to make them so. When approached with a question, he would often answer with a sudden softening of his features for a "yes," a nod or an "inshallah" (God willing) for a "maybe," and a scowl for a "no." He was a pragmatic man who had murdered two half-brothers to secure his throne. He also maintained the first-born sons of the tribal chieftains in an ancient fort atop a mountain that overlooked Ta'izz. Here they remained hostages to ensure peace in the country; should a chieftain so much as entertain a bad thought about the king, a finger or a hand would go.

My first duty was to take the king's blood pressure. Because of his size I had brought from America especially large sphygmomanometer cuffs that would give more accurate readings than normal size blood pressure cuffs. As I announced the numbers of his blood pressure there was an audible sigh of relief from everyone in the room. While the king still was hypertensive, the values were lower than usual. The king was pleased. Thereafter, whenever he called for me I was asked to take his blood pressure. Sometime during the first week he also asked for relief from the pain caused by the bullet in his arm. Fortunately I had brought a long thin needle for this purpose, and the anesthetizing procedure was a great success. The king, pleased with the result, gave me an Arabic name: *Ahsan. Ahsan* means "better." Better than what? Better than the last doctor, maybe? "No, this no joke," everybody assured me. 'Ahsan' is a good Arab name. "You lucky doctor." Anyway, we were off to a good start. He appeared genuinely pleased that I was learning Arabic and fasting like a true Muslim during the month of Ramadan.

My interpreter and I slept in a room adjacent to the king's. One day, soon after my arrival, the king called for us in the middle of the night. For some time he had been dyeing his beard black with a local preparation made from roots that irritated his skin. I told him to stop using it and treated his rash with a topical steroid, to which he responded immediately. I also told him that I would cable my wife to bring him beard dye from America that would have no such side effects. After this he took great interest in my wife's travels and daily inquired about when she would be arriving.

My gift of a Polaroid camera had been warmly received. While my attempts to teach the king how to take pictures failed, I soon found myself his personal photographer, as he would ask me to take pictures of new arrivals. These were invariably ambassadors accredited both to the Yemen and to other countries. Each year they would visit the Yemen and stay a perfunctory two weeks. If the king failed to see

them in that time, they would leave. In addition to taking their picture, I was also asked to find out their business with the king. It was interesting to watch what the king would do with a picture when I gave it to him. He would look at it for a moment, roll his considerable bulk to one side, slip the photo under his buttocks, and roll back; that would be the last I would see of the picture. For his part he gave me a wristwatch with his picture on the dial.

On another occasion I gave him a small herbarium with carnivorous plants that I had purchased through the mail. Some days a host of flies would descend on the palace, and I thought that watching them get eaten by plants would provide a diversion for the king—not to mention ease the task of the four or five Ethiopian nurses whose duty it was on such occasions to fan the flies away. With eyes spread wide, he told me that in the mountains to the north there were plants, many times larger than those I had given him, that ate men.

The following day he gave me a gallon bottle of Le Galion Sortilège cologne, an appropriate gift in Yemen because you are expected to pour a little cologne in a visitor's hands for him to rub together and then rub on his face. It was after this exchange that my interpreter told me that perhaps I was embarrassing the king, because each time he received a gift from me he was obliged to give me an even better gift. And so for a while, but only for a while, the gift-giving cycle was broken.

On the days after I was on duty at the palace the previous night, the king would usually invite me to have breakfast with him. After first taking his blood pressure, and while his Ethiopian nurses idly massaged his feet, I would sit with him to eat fruit and beignets dipped in honey and listen to the news on Radio Cairo. At these times the king would ask me questions about the news. Did I think that the Egyptians would invade Yemen, and why would they want to do that? Why were the Americans putting a man in space when Yemen could make better use of the money? What does a forest look like, and how does it catch on fire? And where does the water come from that fills the Mississippi River? In Yemen there are no rivers, only ancient river beds called *wadis*. After a heavy rain these can produce flash floods that drown those using the wadis as roads.

Night was a time for surprise revelations. Once the king sent for me a little after midnight to see some "monkeys" just found in the mountains. I entered and saw an old man, an old woman, and a teenage boy dressed in rags. We sat quietly, looking at them as they looked at us. I noticed that the old woman was sobbing quietly, tears streaming down her cheeks. After a few minutes my translator announced that it was time to leave. Back in our room I was told that these were Jews who had just been discovered living in a cave. In 1950 the king had expelled all the Jews from Yemen and sent them to Israel. How these three had gone undiscovered and what ultimately became of them I never learned, but I was told that they were expelled from the country that night.

The king was forever solicitous of my well-being. My legs became seriously sunburned after my first extended camel ride, a condition the king alternatively referred to as my "disease of the sun" or my "camel disease." When I would see him in the mornings he would have one of his Ethiopian nurses rub some of his own personal salve on them. On another occasion I was having nightmares after several sticks of dynamite had been discovered in the room below the king's. Presumably this was yet another assassination attempt—there had been five or six already. To me it was obvious that my sleep was being disturbed by thoughts of what might happen to me were a subsequent attempt to blow up the palace be more successful. But the king thought otherwise. He believed that evil spirits were the cause of my nightmares, and so for a week I was asked to sleep at the foot of his bed; this way, if the "jinn" were to disturb me again, he would be there to cast them out.

Most of my time at the palace was spent in the large room near the king's that I shared with my translator, Ahmed Mufara, who gave me my daily four-hour Arabic lesson. The room was starkly furnished with three beds, a couple of chairs, and a table covered with Italian fashion magazines. There was no internal telephone system. Communication between the king and the harem and others was carried out by

prepubertal boys who served as couriers. They spent time with us too. I taught them English and they taught me Arabic. They enjoyed it when I learned phrases like "Don't put me in chains"—something the king might do to someone who offended him—and "Don't chain me to the wall"—something that was done to someone who *really* upset the king. Everyday there were usually half a dozen men chained to the wall near the palace's front entrance.

Though slavery officially did not exist in Yemen, the king did have two eunuch slaves that served him. One spoke some English and visited us frequently. Finally, there was the king's council of ministers, who numbered perhaps a dozen; the king would summon them from time to time. Their ministerial appointments changed frequently. I became close friends with two of the ministers who spoke reasonably good English, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Protocol. The latter was my next-door neighbor, and I got to know him especially well. Unlike politicians, these were men who did not appear to have personal agendas. They served by bringing matters to the attention of the king, advising him, doing his bidding, and doing their best to please him. If they had power, it was certainly not in evidence; nor did it seem that they had daily duties.

On most days, following breakfast, the king would hold court. People would come in person to present their problems to him. They would drop to their knees when they were within about fifteen feet of the king, touch the palms of their hands and forehead to the floor, present their case briefly, hear the king's reply, and leave. Rarely did he see more than two or three people in a day. Most cases were brought to the king's attention as sealed notes written on rolled scraps of paper with the petitioner's name on the outside. One of the palace's messenger boys, who ran errands for the king, would announce who wrote the note; if the king was interested, he would have it unrolled and read. If it was a request and the king approved it, he would write "la bass" (so be it) on the upper left hand corner of the note and sometimes smudge a corner with red pigment. If he did not approve, he would dismiss it with a wave of his hand or, more emphatically, throw it out the window. This was how the country was run. If one needed to travel abroad, build a house in Ta'izz, or send a wife back to her family, the king had to grant permission.

At long last my wife arrived with our two boys, aged three and seven. I met them in Aden and, after buying a cage full of variously colored small birds as a gift for the king, we set out by Land Rover through the mountains. The birds faired poorly and died, whether due to the rough ride or the high altitude I do not know. We went directly to the palace so that I could tell the king of my return. He inquired whether I had had a good trip, whether my wife had arrived safely, and whether she had brought the beard dye from America. I assured him that she had brought a lifetime supply.

By then our house had been completed. It was a modest stucco bungalow with a living room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom. It had electricity and furniture supplied by the U.S. government. To prevent intruders there were iron bars on the windows and, around the perimeter of the courtyard, a high wall, over which, a human head was thrown one day—an event that we all found unsettling. The king had given us an *askari* (soldier) to guard our house. He was one of the king's slaves whose freedom we later bought for seventy-four dollars. He immortalized himself in our international community by presenting the British ambassador, while naked in his bath, with an invitation to come to our house for dinner—and demanding an immediate written reply. I had also engaged a cook, another Ahmed, who was usually paralyzed by drugs in the evenings and who, took our children with him to the mosque when he went on Fridays. Various people at the palace had given us animals for the children's amusement. These included a baby gazelle, a rabbit, and several baboons. The latter we had chained to the walls of our courtyard. They would on occasion—especially in the middle of the night—jump on our metal window bars and with their chains create a fearful din.

It was a house that people enjoyed visiting. The king had given us a large *narghile* (hookah), pillows, and a dozen oriental rugs to make an authentic Yemeni corner in our living room. Our walls sported stuffed heads of charging warthogs

and rampant baboons, skins of *Colubus* monkeys from Ethiopia, and antique Yemeni metal platters and ewers. But the focus of interest was always our bathroom. As there were no banks or paper money in Yemen, I was paid in sixty-six-pound bags of silver rials, coins half again as large as a U.S. silver dollar. Two walls of our bathroom were stacked to the ceiling with these bags.

For me our greatest treasures were our neighbors. We all lived on either side of the straight paved road—the only paved road in the country—that went from the hospital at one end to the palace at the other end. Most were foreign doctors, diplomats, and well-to-do Yemeni. All had interesting tales to tell, but of these the most exotic was Lotifa, who not only spoke English, but who had once been married to the king. She and her two sisters had been born of a Welsh barmaid in Cardiff and a peripatetic father who was a Yemeni seaman. One day the father returned to Wales, collected his three daughters from their mother, and brought them back to Yemen. The king heard about these three "white monkeys" and sent a message to the father, asking to marry one of them. The father said no. The king threw him in jail, where he stayed until he finally acquiesced, and Lotifa married the king. From the beginning Lotifa was unhappy in the marriage. When the king asked her why she was always crying, she told him she was miserable and wanted a divorce. In Islamic culture it is rare for a woman to request a divorce and rarer still for a divorce to be granted, but in this instance the king granted her wish and remarried her to one of his minor officials. It was during this time that I treated her for asthma and saw her frequently, and my wife befriended her and with her friends' help, compiled a catalogue describing the folklore of the country.

Meanwhile, I collected stories of the harem. For example, one member was a beautiful nineteen-year-old blond girl with very white skin. Some years earlier Yemeni soldiers had provoked a border skirmish by attacking positions in Saudi Arabia. In the ensuing fracas the Saudi army overwhelmingly defeated the Yemeni force, but peace was amicably restored between the two countries. In a magnanimous gesture King Faisal, the Saudi monarch at the time and victor, gave this girl, then in her early teens, to the king as a gift. Her Syrian family had originally sold her as a slave to Faisal to raise money to send her brother to medical school. Like Lotifa she was unhappy in the harem and cried a lot. When the king asked her why she was unhappy she told him that she hated being a slave, and so the king married her.

That is not the end of the story, however. She married yet again when I was in Yemen, this time she was given by the king to nineteen-year-old Mohamed Mahmoud, who was unofficially the head of palace security—or secret police, or something like that. He had been adopted by the king after his father, the king's chauffeur, had once saved the king's life by stepping in the way of a would-be assassin's bullet. Mohamed used to give me rides about the city in the king's big black limousine—which had a machine gun mounted on the hood—and, on occasion, offered me whiskey, which I would politely refuse. The wedding was an important affair at the palace, with several big feasts that I had to attend. Food would be laid out on the ground on eight-foot-wide strips of oilcloth that stretched for a hundred feet. Men sat on either side, with relatives of the king at one end. One time I started to take a seat in the middle, but a member of the royal family leapt up, took me by the hand, and led me to the end of the table, where several other members of the royal family began to feed me with their fingers. There were large bowls with hunks of lamb and goat as well as platters of potatoes and rice and, for dessert, canned fruit cup. Everyone ate rapidly. When one person finished, he would leave and another person, lower on the social scale, would take his place. This way several hundred people were quickly fed.

For my wife the wedding festivities were more prolonged and exotic. For three days she was ushered about the harem by the bride herself in her white Ethiopian wedding dress. There was no interpreter. The women sat in groups in different rooms chewing *qat* and smoking *narghiles*. *Qat* is the local narcotic to which both men and women are addicted. Almost everyone in Yemen chews the leaves of the *qat* plant, which contain several alkaloids, for an hour or more daily

until their eyes became glazed and their bodies numb, and they succumb to an otherworldly lethargy. My wife found that the women's interests focused on fashion, and they would descend upon her each day to examine her underwear, shoes, and the labels on her clothes. The food that the women ate was strange-looking chicken, and the beverage they drank was a pink liquid, probably rose water. Not surprisingly, much of the conversation was about the king's thirteen-year-old wife. I had recently found that she had tuberculosis and had her admitted to the local hospital, where my wife had visited her on several occasions before she was sent to a sanatorium in Ethiopia. No doubt everyone wanted to know whether I thought she might return someday. During the festivities my wife was introduced to the king, who gave her a big smile, fingered his beard to let her know that he appreciated his beard dye, and presented her with a ring with his portrait on it. This was a special meeting, since few foreign women ever saw the king.

The foregoing is a sampling of some of the more memorable events that punctuated the fabric of our daily lives in Yemen. Filling up the rest of our time profitably sometimes taxed our ingenuity. However, between my time at the palace and my lessons in Arabic, I found a welter of engaging things to do. High on my priority list was researching interesting things to tell the king, be they news events, scientific facts, local foreign community gossip, or bits of history. In this way I served as an extra pair of eyes for the king, a role we both enjoyed. I spent almost as much time preparing to entertain the palace messenger boys. They were particularly keen to learn magic tricks, acrobatics, and games, and everything that I taught them; they, in turn, enthusiastically performed for, or told to, the king. My wife had arrived with a trunk of toys for the palace children, and we soon learned that the king and his ministers loved toys too. One of my fondest memories is of the king's ministers queuing to sit on the floor in my room in the palace to fly a radio-controlled model plane and land it at a toy airport. I also laid out a badminton court outside the king's window and taught the king's two eunuch slaves how to play. They, in turn, taught not only the palace messenger boys, but the king's guard as well. These were wild-looking tribal askaris, and a new replacement group of twenty or so would arrive at the palace from a different part of the country every month or two. Consequently, we were always training new recruits. The games were energetic and fiercely savage, and the king would shout comments at players from his window.

Most of my "free" time was spent establishing a medical clinic. Here I not only saw patients—mostly Americans and their employees—but also trained Yemeni as medical officers for the road projects, teaching them how to care for wounds, splint fractures, and recognize malaria, sickle cell anemia, tuberculosis, and kidney stones. I also imported seeds of several hundred kinds of flowers and vegetables as well as fruit tree seedlings. The seedlings were obtained during several trips to Asmara, and I planted them with the help of the king's gardener in the king's garden. To the best of my knowledge these were all plants new to Yemen. Additionally I sent away for a butcher's manual and, to the delight of the foreign community, learned enough to teach the local butchers how to prepare rib chops and filet steaks. For recreation I rode the king's horses and camels in the countryside and, using a tape recorder, recorded the tribal songs and the flute and drum music of the king's soldiers from various parts of the country.

In addition to the interviews she and Lotifa conducted with hundreds of Yemeni women, my wife also kept up her palace relations with the king and would, from time to time, bake brownies for him. These were made without nuts since the king had no teeth. The king would always ask me to eat a few to prove that they were not poisoned, and to reciprocate he would send his breakfast leftovers to my wife. In yet another thoughtful gesture to my wife, the king once sent her a baby stork that had fallen from its nest in a tree in the palace's courtyard.

The children were also kept busy. The king had asked to meet them soon after their arrival, at which time he presented them with a donkey. The askari or cook would take them for rides around Ta'izz most every day, and in the

evenings our family visited friends, or, since there were no hotels or restaurants in Ta'izz, we would often be called upon to entertain visiting diplomats.

Some of these parties were unforgettable affairs. One that will stand forever in my memory was given by Mike and Louisa Kennedy. (In 1979 Mike was one of the senior hostages taken by the Iranians when the American embassy was seized in Tehran and Louisa was frequently spokesman on T.V. for the group while her husband was held captive.) The evening was proceeding pleasantly and peacefully when all of a sudden the Kennedy's houseboy burst into the living room screaming that he had just been murdered. His face, hands, and clothes were covered with blood. Wrapping a towel around his head to stop the gush of blood, I took him down to the clinic to sew up the three or four scalp lacerations that had been inflicted during a disagreement with another houseboy. Everybody in Yemen carries his own *jambia* (dagger), and with a little *qat* things can happen.

During my visit to the Yemen, collecting antiquities was never a primary interest. The subject was a sensitive issue, because in 1951 Wendell Phillips and a team of notable archaeologists surveying the county's ancient monuments had left abruptly under uncertain conditions, taking with them a number of important artifacts. I did, however, mention to the king one time that I would like to acquire a few small objects and see the great dam at Mārib some day. The king gave me the indefinite "inshallah" (god willing), and so it was a wonderful surprise when a few days later an itinerant merchant appeared at my house with a bagful of trinkets. His name, too, was Ahmed, and he spoke rapidly, laughing, and clipping his words so that I could never understand him; but when it came to discussing money, his fingers flew in the air to indicate prices, and suddenly he became quite intelligible. On his first visit I bought everything he had, which was mostly old jewelry, a small bronze bull's head, an iron pendant, and two inscribed stone seals. While these cost only a few dollars, I was excited by the seals and tried to explain what I would be even more interested in buying in the future. Whether he understood me I do not know, but return he did every month or so after that, and, as far as I know, I always remained his only customer in Ta'izz. He never brought me anything momentous, but what he did bring was often interesting. In addition to Yemeni jewelry, there would be items like small round carnelian balls that a man would put under his tongue to help maintain an erection, a small inscribed bowl that would remove curses when one drank water from it, old coins, old alabaster temple lamps, and even an ancient architectural fragment of black quartzite with a bull's head.

The king had two old DC-3 airplanes that constituted the royal Yemeni airline. Both were flown by Yugoslavian pilots. One day I heard that one of the pilots had just been caught with an Arab girl and had been forced to leave the country. I thought that this might be the end of the king's airline, so imagine my surprise when a week or so later the king told me there would be a plane in two days to fly me to Mārib to see the dam. I was told I could invite others along as well. Since none of the Americans had been to Mārib, I had no difficulty rounding up a group of about twenty. Mārib is northeast of Ta'izz and lies on reasonably flat land at the beginning of the Rub al-Khālī, better known as the "Empty Quarter." After about an hour in the air we reached Mārib, but after five or six passes there was still no sign of a landing strip. By this time I think we all were a little concerned, but land we did—in the sand, I believe—after which there was great applause for the pilot.

Mārib is a wonderfully romantic Arab city. We arrived as a caravan was getting ready to depart, and witnessed more than a hundred camels having their mouths forcibly opened and buckets of water thrown down their gullets to hydrate them for the journey. I spent my day photographing the ancient structures that the sands had not yet reclaimed, everything that had writing on it, and the more important antiquities in the king's storehouse. When the light failed I sought out the Amir (local prince). He was a youngish man who had broken a leg several months earlier that had failed to heal sufficiently to allow him to bear weight on it. I told him that he needed surgery in a major hospital. We then discussed archaeology, including new surface finds, and

how Mārib had not been visited by foreigners since Wendell Phillips' team was there in early 1951. As we parted he gave me a broken alabaster head. That night we were so incredibly hot that we all slept on the roof of the building in which we were housed. In the morning the pilot announced he was not confident that we could take off without a proper runway, but we all got on the plane anyway and, after a prolonged warm-up, took off without mishap.

The king was very interested in my trip to Mārib. He promised that the Amir would get medical attention for his broken leg. He wanted to see my pictures and asked for my film so he could have it developed. In those days there was no where in Yemen that developed film, and I had visions of my film being lost forever were it sent to Aden. Thinking fast, I said the film had already been sent to Asmara and then quickly arranged for it to be sent and developed at the U.S. Army base there that week. When the pictures arrived I gave them to the king. We reviewed each one, and when we had finished, he asked me which of the alabaster pieces in his storehouse I liked best. I picked out two, and he grunted.

A month or so later I was attending him and noticed that the two pieces in the photograph I had taken were now leaning against a wall in a corner of his room. Nothing was said about them that day, nor the next. On the third day he pointed to them and asked if they were the pieces I liked. I told him they were. There was a long pause, and then he said he was giving them to me but that he would keep them for now and that I was not to tell any foreigners. I thanked him kindly, and that was the end of my collecting activities in the Yemen.

Most definitely there were times when things did not go well at the palace. One day during the fall of 1962 a large white airplane with a red cross painted on its side landed at the Ta'izz airport. I was visiting the U.S. legation when I heard of its arrival and asked to be driven to the airport to see what was happening. It was an incredible show. There were about fifteen or twenty men and women dressed in white coats standing among some sheep that were being unloaded from the plane. They had attracted a good-sized crowd. Try as I might I was unable to find anyone who could tell me what was happening. My Arabic never was good, but even so I could tell that nobody was interested in trying to answer my questions. My driver, however, soon found out everything. A famous Swiss doctor had just arrived. He had come to Yemen several years before and given the king adrenal extracts prepared from fetal lambs in order to rejuvenate him. My immediate worry was that the king might have been sensitized to foreign proteins, and, should the extracts be given to him again, they might provoke a serious reaction. I hurried to the palace to tell the king of my concerns. He heard me out and muttered something that I could not hear. Later my translator told me that the king had called me a "crazy donkey," which is not a polite thing to call someone in Arabic. During the week that followed almost every man I knew had received an injection of the extracts except the king. He must have been piqued no end since he had undoubtedly paid dearly in advance for the treatment. I did not, however, fall out of favor with the king, because a week or two later the administrator of the local hospital said something derogatory about me—what it was I never learned—but the king was furious and made the administrator kill a camel to atone for his comment. This was done in the market, at my request, where the meat could be given to the poor.

Things began going poorly for the king. Beginning in late summer the Egyptians vigorously tried to foment a revolution in Yemen. Every day Radio Cairo exhorted the Yemeni to overthrow the monarchy, and, because few people in Yemen had radios, free receivers were being mysteriously handed out in the countryside as well as in the cities. The Egyptians had been grooming a Yemeni, then living in Egypt, to be the new leader. As if this was not enough, an Egyptian destroyer in the Red Sea was patrolling the Yemen coast. Things were so bad that, for their safety, I sent my family to Asmara.

On the evening of September 18 I was urgently called to the palace. The king had suddenly lost consciousness and appeared to have suffered a massive stroke. The four or five doctors that worked at the hospital were also summoned.

They concurred with me that the king had had a cerebral accident at the base of the brain. The king's regular nursing staff denied that his recent activities involved anything unusual that might suggest foul play.

I was in attendance that night when the king died, having never regained consciousness. Almost immediately the women of the harem began to wail and cry, and I had to have the chief nurse sedate them lest people outside the palace surmise what had happened. All members of the king's council were out of town except the Minister of Protocol. I sent for him, and we discussed the situation. He agreed that he should fly immediately to Ṣana'ā' to urge the king's son, al Badr, to come immediately to Ta'izz. I went to the soldiers guarding the palace entrance and told them not to let anyone leave the palace. Then we began the long wait for the king's son. By eight the next morning it was evident he was not coming. I returned to the main gate and reminded the guards not to let anyone leave. Then I myself left to inform the chargé d'affaires, Bob Stookey, that the king had died. Later that morning I boarded a plane to Asmara to join my family.

My story doesn't quite end there. The Egyptian army did indeed invade, but in Ta'izz, no resistance was offered and everything there remained peaceful, and I was able to return to fulfill my obligations to the legation. No tribes had swept in to ransack Ta'izz, and my family was able to join me soon after. But changes there were. All the king's ministers were executed and the rumor was that, had I remained, I, too, was to be shot as well. Our house remained intact, however, officials of the new Yemeni government came and took away our rugs, but the cook and *askari* remained. For me the biggest change was brought about by the arrival of a three-hundred bed, fully equipped hospital from a U.S. base Army in Libya, and I was suddenly busy making disposition of the equipment until December, when, after my contract expired, I left to take up an appointment at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School in London.

Two questions still beg to be addressed. How did the collection of South Arabian alabasters ever get formed and, once made, how can it be given away to the Walters Art Museum without remorse?

The answer to the first question is simple. Most of the collection was bought at Sotheby's London auction house between 1962 and 1971. These pieces were added to the few that I had collected in the Yemen. The two pieces that the king gave me disappeared from the palace during the revolution. One showed up at Sotheby's broken and partially burnt and I bought it, and the other, unquestionably the most important piece in the entire collection, I privately purchased a few years later from one of the Queen's guardsmen, who had acquired it in Bayḥān.

As for giving the collection to the Walters, this is truly a very special pleasure. The Yemen experience in a strange and wonderful way has long ago worked its magic. The interest in archaeology that it engendered in me led to my thirteen-year participation in the Walters Art Museum's excavations at the Temple of Apollo Hyalates in Kourion, Cyprus, which in turn, led to my association with fourteen other excavations in the Mediterranean area. These then led to more than sixty publications in archaeology, service on the boards and committees of three national archaeological associations, and six years as President of the Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute. Archaeology has truly been one of the passions in my life, and I owe it all to the king of Yemen and the Walters Art Museum.

My wife, who joins me in this gift, and I thank the Walters and their Board of Trustees for the many highlights in our lives made possible under their auspices, and for giving us the unique opportunity to leave something that is truly a part of ourselves to the City of Baltimore.

History of Ancient South Arabia

Regine Schulz

The ancient geographers divided the Arabian Peninsula into three parts: the north (Arabia Petraea, the Roman-influenced area with Petra as its center); the center (Arabia Deserta, the desert area); and the south (Arabia Felix – "Happy Arabia"). The latter included the territories of today's Yemen, the regions of Dhofār in western Oman, as well as Najrān and parts of Hijaz in southern Saudi Arabia. It contains the hot western lowlands of the Tihāma and southern coastal zones, the cool high mountains with Jabal an-Nabishu'ayb (elevation 12,000 feet), and the South Arabian plateau, with its desert, steppe regions, fertile oases, and wadis.

Prehistory

Archaeologists studying relicts of Paleolithic hunter-gatherers and Neolithic communities have found stone tools from the Early Paleolithic Period (ca. 700,000 years ago) in the Wādī Do'ān, and from the Middle (30,000–200,000 years ago) and Late Paleolithic Periods (10,000–30,000 years ago) in Shabwa. We now know that the climate changed 8,000 years ago and became wetter, and parts of today's desert regions were covered with vegetation; lakes appeared and some of the wadis were constantly filled with water. The fauna became richer too, and large cattle and horses appeared. These can be seen in rock drawings. This pleasant environment encouraged the development of Neolithic settlements. Excavators are discovering in these settlements not only stone tools, arrow-heads, and ax-blades, but also grinding stones and fossilized ostrich eggs and mussel shells. Breeding of cattle, sheep, and goats had become part of the South Arabian Neolithic life by the 6th millennium BC at the latest, and agriculture was most likely introduced by the 5th millennium BC. The return of a desiccating climate in the 5th and 4th millennia BC changed the lifestyle of the people once again as large areas returned to desert: animals disappeared and people left to settle in the wadis. In the early 4th millennium BC the development of irrigation systems in the Ḥaḍramawt and the terracing of fields in the western mountains first appeared. The changes are dramatically seen in rock paintings. The large animals, like buffalo and aurochs, disappear, and people are now seen with ibexes and antelopes. These new images may well be the forerunners of the "sacred hunt," the hunt to induce the gods to give rain and rich harvests.

During the 3rd millennium BC, South Arabia entered the Bronze Age. Most of the settlements grew larger, and, with improved agricultural techniques and stock-breeding methods developing along the coastal regions in particular, cultures arose which may have been closely related to those on the African side of the Red Sea. Ritual places with megalithic stones and large stelae appeared, and villages with mud-brick buildings were built. The Sabir culture, named after its main excavation site near Aden, developed an advanced society that expanded along the coastal regions during the second half of the 2nd millennium BC. Trade and industries, including ceramic and metal production, became an essential part of life, and numerous finds of precious metal and stone objects attest to the wealth of the Sabir people. The most important trade goods were probably frankincense and myrrh, and the land of Punt, which the Egyptians identified as the country in which the precious resins frankincense and myrrh originated, likely included both the African side of the southern Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden and the South Arabian coast. During this time there may have been influxes of people from the north. Contemporaneous pottery excavated in Shabwa in the Ḥaḍramawt region is similar to that in Palestine, suggesting that these people were early immigrants.

Economy and Society of the Ancient South Arabian Kingdoms

The economy of all the ancient kingdoms was based on agriculture, which included grains (wheat, barley, and sorghum), vegetables, and fruits, as well as dates and grapes for producing wine. Sophisticated irrigation systems were necessary; the best known of these was the large dam in the Wādī Dhana near Mārib. This dam increased the arable land to nearly 25,000 acres, making it possible to raise enough food not only to feed its 50,000 inhabitants, but to provide sufficient surplus for local trade with nomads and sustain the needs of the caravan trade. The breeding of domestic animals further enriched the food supply while providing means

Map of Ancient South Arabia (green: cultures of the 2nd millennium BC; red: ancient kingdoms; black, italics: regions, wadis; black, non-italic: cities and excavation sites).

of transportation and fulfilling the needs for sacrificial rituals. It was agriculture, then, that sustained the international trade that made the Southern Arabian kingdoms rich.

The overland trade routes went from one principal city to another. Incense was carried on camels from Dhofār to Shabwa (the capital of Ḥaḍramawt), to Timna' (capital of Qatabān), to Mārib (capital of Saba'), and on to Najrān, where the trade route split into northern and eastern routes. Myrrh, which came from the Wādī Bayḥān via Timna', was also transported along the same routes. Finally, the luxury trade from India fed into the incense trade from land and sea. High taxes, tolls, and protection fees, as well as expensive provisions, made trade route cities wealthy.

From region to region ancient South Arabian societies differed slightly. We know most about Saba'. In Saba' the *Mukarrib,* or "the unifier of the land," ruled the country. The villages and families were part of a clan, and these clans were combined into a confederation. The ruler's responsibility was to secure alliances between clans and ensure unified support. As the confederation became a more cohesive unit, the title *Mukarrib* disappeared in favor of *Malik,* or "king." The second most important person in the state was the *Kabīr,* or "Big Person," whose title later was changed to *Qayl.* He was probably responsible for internal affairs. The most important governmental organization was the "Council of State," which consisted of representatives of the clans, rich landowners, and members of other influential groups. The king could not unilaterally make decisions without the advice of this council.

The society was structured on two different levels: the kingships and alliances of the clans, and the class structure within clans. Nobles were landowners or military leaders, and tribal members were soldiers, traders, or free peasants. Serfs and slaves belonged to the rich families or clans, but not to individuals. Noblemen of the principal clan in their region governed the cities and villages of the highlands, assisted by a tribal council or assembly. Together they administered major building, commercial projects, and military expeditions. Family members might serve as priests and be involved

in temple rituals. In Saba' and Qatabān the major landowners and members of the military class were the most prestigious, while landless traders, construction workers, and craftsmen were less esteemed. Other kingdoms may have been structured differently, but the differences likely were not great.

During the second half of the 1st millennium BC, South Arabia became progressively urbanized. Cities and villages were built on small hills in the valley basins to escape flooding. The settlements were not large: Mārib covered about 270 acres, and Timna' about 57. In this way fertile land was conserved to raise food for the inhabitants and caravans. The cities were compact, with multistory houses, narrow streets, and strong city walls with bastions and towers for defense. Buildings were constructed of stone or mud, or both. Besides villages and cities, fortresses played an important role and were sited on top of massive rocks or mountains. Some belonged to tribal rulers; others served as refuge for residents of nearby cities. Examples are Ẓafār, capital of the Ḥimyar kingdom, and Qāni', the harbor city of Ḥaḍramawt. These fortresses were equipped with cisterns to collect rain to ensure an adequate water supply during a siege.

The palaces of the rulers were undoubtedly an integral part of the cities. Although they are mentioned in numerous inscriptions, to date there is no archaeological evidence for their existence, except the palace in Shabwa and a similar building in Timna'. It is uncertain how much of the ancient and medieval descriptions we can believe. The Hellenistic historian Diodorus Siculus (80–29 BC) describes the incredible wealth of the palace of "Saba" with its "halls encircled by large columns, some of them gilded, and others having silver figures on the capitals; and ceilings and doors . . . with sunken recesses set with close-packed gem stones" (Diodorus, III, 47; see Oldfather, 1935). The Yemen historian and geographer Abū Muhamad al Hassān al-Hamdānī, who died in AD 945, reports in his *Book of the Crowns* (Kitāb al-Iklīl) that the Ghumdān palace in Ṣana'ā' had "the most widespread reputation" and that "Ghumdān was twenty stories high. . . . At each of the palace's corners stood a copper statue of a lion; these were hollow so that whenever the wind blew through them a sound similar to the actual roaring of the lions would be heard. . . . On top of the palace was a room that had several windows, each made with a marble frame and ebony woodwork, with silk curtains. The roof of the room was of one single slab of marble" (Hamdānī, Iklīl, VIII, 18 and 22–25; see Müller, 1899).

The History of the South Arabian Kingdoms

Semitic-speaking groups continuing to immigrate from the Near East by the end of the 2nd and the early 1st millennia BC displaced or commingled with earlier local cultures. The newcomers brought with them a written script. The newly amalgamated society developed an advanced administration, enhanced agricultural methods, improved irrigation systems, and built monumental buildings. Villages and clans joined to form larger units that became the first kingdoms. The most important of these kingdoms developed in the large wadis: Ma'īn in the Wādī Jawf, Saba' in the Wādī Dhana, Qatabān in the Wādī Bayḥān, Awsān in the Wādī Markha, and Ḥaḍramawt situated in the region of the same name. From the 2nd century BC, Ḥimyar began to play an increasingly important role, and by the end of the 3rd century AD it had occupied all of the other territories.

The chronology of the main kingdoms has long been a matter of debate. It is based primarily on changes in the written script. Few South Arabian texts deal with historically datable events, and therefore dating these changes can be and often is problematic. Nevertheless, archaeological evidence in al-Durayg, the ancient city of Hafar, has made it possible to develop a reasonable chronology. From these findings we can estimate that the Sabaean culture began at the end of the 2nd millennium BC.

The name of Saba' appears during the last part of the 8th century BC. This we know from both local inscriptions and foreign reports, some of which list Sheba as a variant of Saba'. The "Queen of Sheba" and her visit to Solomon are mentioned in the Bible, and several Assyrian texts name this kingdom. In an inscription on a clay tablet from the 8th century BC the Assyrian governor of Suchu and Mari

boasts of having plundered a caravan of two hundred camels sent from Saba' and Timna'. The reason for his behavior may have been due to the fact that there was no trade agreement. The author of the text complains to the governor that "no messengers were sent" to him in advance. Other inscriptions from the time of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pilesar III (744–727 BC) name Saba' as a tributary, and a text under Sargon II (721–705 BC) mentions a Sabaean named "Yta'amara." In 689 BC, King Sennacherib (704–681 BC) must have invited the Sabaean king Karib'īl to Assur for the new-year's festival. Karib'īl sent for this occasion precious gifts, including gemstones and perfumes that were placed in the foundation of the New-Years-Temple.

In the 8th century BC the Sabaean kings controlled only the region around Ṣirwāḥ, Mārib, and southern parts of the Jawf region. Later they enlarged their influence through alliances with Qatabān and Ḥaḍramawt and by colonizing parts of Ethiopia, where they made alliances with the local tribes. In Ethiopia they introduced their script, administration system, and religion, and some of the Ethiopian rulers took on the title of *Mukarrib of Da'amat* (allied tribes) and *Saba'* (colonies).

Saba's hegemony was not always welcomed, however, and bloody wars broke out under Sabaean king Karib'īl Watār, son of Dhamar' Alī (ca. 685 BC). At the end of his reign he commissioned a report on his glorious achievements, which included eight military campaigns. The bloodiest of these campaigns was directed against the kingdom of Awsān, which controlled the port of Aden and was well known for its trade relations, particularly with Africa. The war of Karib'īl caused the complete destruction of the Awsānean kingdom. Karib'īl's text reports that he put 16,000 Awsāneans to death and captured 40,000; he burned their cities, and destroyed the royal palace, including all its inscriptions, and their temples. The last of these actions demonstrated to allies and potential competitors of Saba' that even the Awsāneans' relationship to their gods had been destroyed. The conquering expeditions were directed against the southwestern regions and the Western Ḥaḍramawt to gain control over the caravan routes. Karib'īl Watār was not only a successful commander-in-chief, he was also a careful manager of internal affairs. He fortified cities and developed irrigation systems, and his son Yada''il Dhārih erected three major temples: the 'Awwām temple in Mārib, the temple of Ṣirwāḥ, and one in al-Masājid. Less is known about Sabaean history during the two hundred years that followed. Two more conflicts are mentioned, as well as the construction of towers, gates, and temples, but we cannot precisely date these events. The most important achievement during the second half of the 6th century BC was the construction of the large dam of Mārib. Yet, toward the end of this century a dramatic loss of power emerged, and even Qatabān, a formerly close ally, became a competitor and enemy. Nevertheless, Saba' remained one of the leading forces in ancient South Arabia, and its rulers began to mint their own coins in the 4th and 3rd centuries BC. From the first century on, Saba' and Ḥimyar had numerous conflicts with each other and with other kingdoms. By the late 2nd century AD, the Hamdān dynasty was established in Mārib, which tried to strengthen the Sabaean role. Under king Alhān Nahfān, an alliance with the Ethiopian kingdom was established, but it soon failed under his son Sha'irum Awtar. This son, however, was strong enough to defeat the Ḥaḍramawtean army, capture their king, and plunder Shabwa. He also fought against the Central Arabian bedouin kingdom of the Kindas, but the result of this campaign is unknown. The last strong Sabaean kings belonged to the Gurat dynasty. They conquered Ḥimyar in 248–249 AD, but only two or three decades later Ḥimyar struck back, this time defeating Saba' completely, and later Ḥaḍramawt as well.

North of Saba' was the kingdom of Ma'īn, with its capital Yaṭill and later, Qarnāwu. The origins of this kingdom remain obscure, but it must have been a vassal of Saba', because it is first mentioned by the Sabaean ruler Yiṯa''amar Bayyin (6th century BC), who was involved in the construction of the Dam of Mārib. From the 4th century BC the kingdom was independent of Saba' and, together with Ḥaḍramawt, controlled large sections of the incense road, including the Northern Arabian Dedān. Minaeans were

settlers and trader-nomads, and traveled to distant places such as Egypt and Greece. In the late 2nd century BC, the kingdom was destroyed; its territory became part of Saba' and its northern colony part of the Nabataean sphere of influence, which caused an ongoing problem for Saba', as Petra, the Nabataen capital, became one of the most important and wealthy stops on the Incense Road.

Another kingdom that was an ally and occasionally a competitor of Saba' was Qatabān. It is mentioned several times by Roman authors, but not much is known about its history. There is little doubt that it was wealthy and its area of influence extensive. During the 5th–3rd centuries BC it reached from the southern coast to the al-Jūbah oasis in the north. The Greek historian Strabo (ca. 64–20 BC) reports that the kingdom extended to the Red Sea. The Roman author Pliny the Elder (79–23 BC) referred to the Qatabāneans as "Gebbanitae" and mentions their capital Timna' and numerous other cities, including the port Okelis. Timna', he tells us, had a monopoly on the trade in cinnamon, and the Qatabāneans levied taxes for the intermediate trade in myrrh and frankincense. The South Arabian texts add little. The name of a king Wara'īl has survived—likely a contemporary of Karib'īl Watār—and an alliance with Ḥaḍramawt against Awsān is also mentioned. The decline of Qatabān began when it lost its role as the leading force in international trade, and in the 1st century BC the southern and western regions became independent. It survived as an autonomous kingdom until the end of the 2nd century AD, when the Ḥaḍramites took control. The capital at Timna' possibly was abandoned earlier and moved to Dhū-Ghayl.

The kingdom of Ḥaḍramawt, which included in ancient times the frankincense-producing region of Dhofār, was a vassal of Saba' from the 8th through 5th centuries BC, before it became autonomous. Its capital at Shabwa was located at the edge of the Ramlat Ṣayhad desert, and it had two main ports on the southern coast, Qāni' and Sumhuram (Samhar). Having control over Dhofār and large parts of the incense road made the kingdom one of the most important players in the international trade from the 4th to the 2nd century BC. The king Yada''īl is mentioned in an inscription as a treaty partner of the Sabaean king 'Alhān Nahfān in late 2nd or early 3rd century AD. Also in the 2nd century AD the capital was moved to Shibām. The end of an independent Ḥaḍramawt came in the late 3rd century AD, when the country was conquered by the Ḥimyars and became part of their empire. Although they were able to liberate themselves for a brief and final interval in the 4th century AD, they were soon reconquered and totally destroyed. The destruction of Shabwa, which was not only the capital, but also an important station on the Incense Road, created considerable problems and may have precipitated the rerouting of the incense trade from land to sea.

With its capital Ẓafār, the last and largest of the South Arabian kingdoms was Ḥimyar. Originally it was part of Qatabān, but it became independent in the late 2nd century BC, and its ascent began with the decline of Qatabān and Ma'īn. During the 1st centuries BC and AD, Ḥimyar benefited from the problems of Saba', especially its ongoing conflict with the Nabataeans. In addition, another foreign power showed interest in Sabaean affairs: Rome. The Roman emperor Augustus recognized that he could secure the sea routes to China and India by controlling the ports of the Red Sea. Augustus sent a large army to South Arabia with Aelius Gallus, Prefect of Egypt, as military commander. The Nabataeans supported this campaign and joined him with a thousand camel soldiers. The historian Strabo describes the expedition, which started in the summer of 25 BC (Strabo XVI, 4; see Jones, 1930). At first they conquered the oasis of Najrān, and then the former Minaean city of Yaṭill. From there they moved on to besiege Mārib but had to withdraw after only six days. The reason for their retreat is unclear, but hot climate, lack of water and food, and illness may have each played a role. The army had to leave South Arabia, and Ḥimyar never became a province of Rome.

During the next two hundred years Ḥimyar gained more and more power, and between AD 270 and 280 it conquered and destroyed its last two competitors, Saba' and Ḥaḍramawt. The rulers of Ḥimyar took on the new title

"King of Saba' and Dhū-Raydān," (the name of the fortress of Ẓafār), and "Ḥaḍramawt and Yamanat." The last name has not been identified, but it may be one of the western regions of South Arabia. The new empire was interested in international contacts. We know, for example, that King Shammar Yuhar'ish sent an ambassador to the Sasanian court. During the 4th century AD, the religion changed, as the main god of the empire, 'Almaqah, was replaced by the monotheistic god Raḥmānān. More and more people converted to the Christian and Jewish religions. In addition, the country also had to face the catastrophic breaking of the dam in Mārib, which required extensive repair. It is still an open question whether parts of the country were conquered by 'Ēzānā, King of Aksum, who added to his titles that he was also king of Ḥimyar and Saba'. However, if such an occupation took place it was short-lived, because Bishop Theophilos met a Ḥimyaritic ruler when he visited Ẓafār in the middle of the 4th century.

The last strong ruler of the South Arabian kingdoms was Abākarib As'ad, who ruled in the 5th century. He extended his empire to Central Arabia and may have visited Medīna and converted to Judaism. In the early 6th century Ḥimyar had to struggle for stability because of conflicts between Christians and Jews. The Ethiopian king of Aksum had been asked by the Christian bishop Thomas to interfere militarily in South Arabian affairs to protect the Christians. Local tribes opposed this foreign intervention, and riots against the Ethiopian allies and Christians broke out, especially in Najrān, where most of the Christians were killed (AD 518–523). The Ethiopian king Ella Aṣbāḥā, called Kālēb, conquered South Arabia in AD 525 and made it an Ethiopian protectorate. He was supported by the Byzantine Empire. The country remained under Aksum's domination for forty years. During this time the vassal king Abrehā struggled against the bedouins of the former Kinda dynasty. His last military campaign against Makka (ca. AD 570) is well known, not so much for its results but because the army had an elephant. When the local tribes sought support against the occupation, their request was answered by the Sasanians, who supported the South Arabian revolt and drove the Aksumite troops out of the country. They did not become independent, however, because they had become the vassals of the Persian Sasanids. At the same time, the large dam of Mārib broke for the last time and was never repaired. In many ways this marked the end of the ancient South Arabian kingdoms.

Who Is the Queen of Sheba?

Robert Steven Bianchi

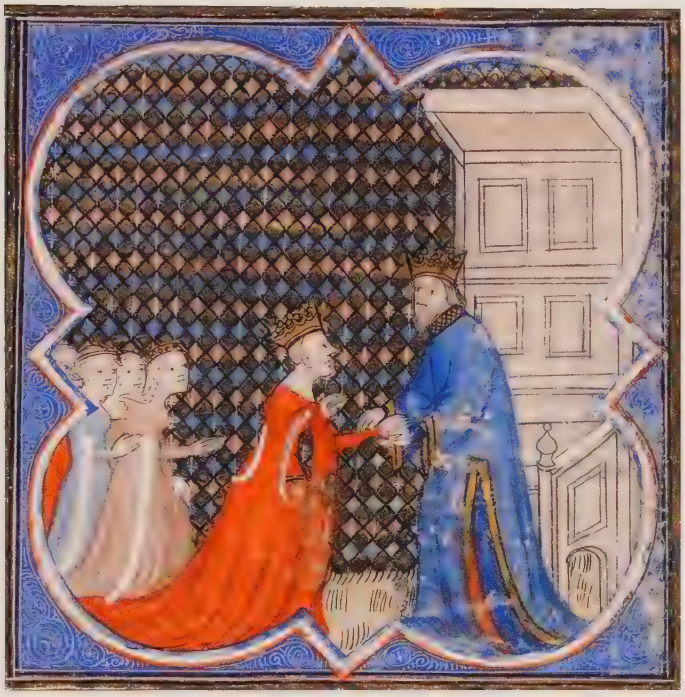
To answer this question we must first sift through the primary sources to document how her legend developed over the centuries, focusing on each historical epoch in chronological order. In this way we can learn how the legend of the Queen of Sheba was created and successively modified over the millennia, and we can conclusively demonstrate that the traditions presently associated with her were never promulgated in one specific place at one specific time but rather were constructed in patchwork fashion over succeeding generations.

The Queen of Sheba emerges as an intriguing personality in the Judeo-Christian and Muslim traditions. Her acceptance by both Yemeni and Ethiopians reveals just how geographically widespread her impact actually is. Despite this acknowledgment, there is no conclusive archaeological evidence of her association with either. She appears on the ancient stage for the first time in the Hebrew Bible in two accounts, the first in 1 Kings 10:1–13 and again in an almost verbatim repetition of those verses in 2 Chronicles 9:1–12. Her appearance is linked to King Solomon, who himself emerges as a larger-than-life personality. This association doubtless contributed to her reputation and posthumous fame. It is, therefore, worth quoting 1 Kings 10:1–13 in full:

(1) The queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fame and came to test him with difficult questions. (2) She arrived in Jerusalem with a very large retinue, with camels laden with spices and an immense quantity of gold and precious stones. Having reached Solomon, she discussed with him everything that she had in mind, (3) and Solomon had an answer for all of her questions; not one of them was too obscure for the king to answer for her. (4) When the queen of Sheba saw how very wise Solomon was, the palace which he had built, (5) the food at his table, the accommodation for his officials, the organization of his staff and the way they were dressed, his cupbearers, and the burnt offering which he presented to the Temple of Yahweh, it left her breathless, (6) and she said to the king, "The report I heard in my own country about your wisdom in handling your affairs was true then! (7) Until I came and saw for myself, I did not believe the reports, but clearly I was told less than half: for wisdom and prosperity, you surpass what was reported to me. (8) How fortunate your wives are! How fortunate those countries of yours, continually in attendance on you and listening to your wisdom! (9) Blessed be Yahweh your God who has shown you his favor by setting you on the throne of Israel, he has made you king to administer law and justice." (10) And she presented the king with a hundred and twenty talents of gold and great quantities of spices and precious stones; no such wealth of spices ever came again as those which the queen Sheba gave to King Solomon. . . . (13) And King Solomon, in his turn, presented the queen of Sheba with everything that she expressed a wish for, besides those presents which he gave her with a munificence worthy of King Solomon. After which, she went home to her own country, she and her servants.

The Queen of Sheba is introduced without any preliminaries; neither her name nor the name of her country is specified. The mention of spices, gold, and precious stones, and of the camels on which these commodities were laden, suggests that the queen was involved in caravan trade, but attempting to use the mention of spices to prove that she came from either Yemen or Ethiopia is problematic. Admittedly, Yemen is associated with frankincense trees, but one cannot overlook the fact that Ethiopia may have been part of the Land of Punt from where the ancient Egyptians obtained myrrh, as one sees commemorated on the reliefs at Deir el-Bahari in the mortuary temple of Queen Hatshepsut of Dynasty XVIII (1479–1457 BC). Furthermore, we have no information regarding exactly how the fame of Solomon reached the ears of the Queen of Sheba, or about the distance she traveled to reach Jerusalem or the time it took.

What the passage does convey is that the Queen of Sheba is an exceptionally erudite individual who decides to travel to Jerusalem in order to question Solomon so that she herself can personally determine just how smart Solomon



King Solomon meets the Queen of Sheba. Frontispiece to the Book of Proverbs, Paris, circa 1380, parchment with ink, paint, and gold. Walters Art Museum W.126 Folio 1R detail.

really is. She tests the king and finds him not wanting.

The distance traveled and the erudition of the Queen of Sheba are twice mentioned in the Christian New Testament in virtually identical passages in Luke 11:13 and Matthew 12:42: "On Judgment Day the Queen of the South will appear against this generation and be its condemnation, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon." These two accounts suggest that the realm of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon's Jerusalem are geographically very far apart. Both reaffirm that the queen is wise, and, because of her ability to condemn inappropriate social intercourse, she appears as King Solomon's equal in dispensing law and administering justice.

Satisfied that they are equals, the king and queen present each other with regal gifts. This exchange, however, is prefaced by the following remark in 1 Kings 13: "And King Solomon, in his turn, presented the queen of Sheba with everything that she expressed a wish for, besides those presents." Some commentators have suggested that the phrase "everything that she expressed a wish for" is fraught with sexual connotations and which may have resulted in their union. The suggestion is further supported by a passage in the Hebrew Bible's "Song of Songs," the subject of which is universally regarded as love and specifically identified with King Solomon. The beloved in these lyrics says, "I am black but comely" (1.5), which some claim is the voice of the Queen of Sheba herself. Accordingly, the Queen of Sheba is depicted as an extremely intellectual and beautiful woman who tested King Solomon's knowledge and then seduced him.

The question of the Queen of Sheba's identity is suggested by a laconic mention in Psalm 72:10:

> *Kings of Sheba and Sheba*
> *will offer gifts*

which appears to be the only verse in the entire Hebrew and Christian Bible containing her name, Sheba. Scholars interpret the appearance of the name "Sheba" in early Christian circles as either a place name or the name of the queen, and

it is variously spelled Sabbe or Sambethe. Early Christians of Alexandria identified the country as the vast kingdom of Saba, located in Southern Arabia, from which its queen came to meet Solomon.

In Byzantine times the Queen of Sheba was regarded as a prophetic sibyl who foretold the coming of Christ. The identification of her kingdom becomes standard by the 6th century AD when the Byzantine explorer Cosmas Indicopleustes, visiting Axum shortly before 520, mentions the Queen of Sheba and cites her realm as the country of the Ḥimyarites. He goes on to say that she imported luxurious articles from Ethiopia across the Red Sea and presented them to King Solomon. The association of the Queen of Sheba with Ethiopia was, therefore, firmly established by the middle of the 1st millennium AD.

Her connection with Ethiopia was subsequently reinforced in the 14th century AD in Ethiopia in the *Kabra Nagast*, or *The Glory of the Kings*, which provides a biography of the Queen of Sheba based on the passages from the Hebrew and Christian Bibles that acknowledge a seduction. In this account she is identified as an Axumite queen named Makeda who, en route back to her kingdom, delivered a son named Menelik. Menelik then journeyed to Jerusalem, where his father, King Solomon, anointed him king of Ethiopia. He returned with the Ark of the Covenant, containing the original tablets on which the Ten Commandments were written, and founded the Solomonic Dynasty of Ethiopia, whose last descendant was Emperor Haile Selassie (1892–1975).

The Queen of Sheba is also mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān, written during the 7th century, in Surah XXVII, The Ant, verses 16–44:

16. And Solomon was David's heir. And he said: O mankind! Lo! We have been taught the language of birds, and have been given (abundance) of all things. This surely is evident favor.
17. And there were gathered together unto Solomon his armies of all the jinn and humankind, and of the birds, and they were set in battle order;
18. Till, when they reached the Valley of the Ants, an ant exclaimed: O ants! Enter your dwellings lest Solomon and his armies crush you, unperceiving.
19. And (Solomon) smiled, laughing at her speech, and said: My Lord, arouse me to be thankful for Thy favor wherewith Thou hast favored me and my parents, and to do good that shall be pleasing unto Thee, and include me in (the number of) Thy righteous slaves.
20. And he sought among the birds and said: How is it that I see not the hoopoe, or is he among the absent?
21. I verily will punish him with hard punishment or I verily will slay him, or he verily shall bring me a plain excuse.
22. But he was not long in coming, and he said: I have found out (a thing) that thou apprehendest not, and I come unto thee from Sheba with sure tidings.
23. Lo! I found a woman ruling over them, and she hath been given (abundance) of all things, and hers is a mighty throne.
24. I found her and her people worshipping the sun instead of Allah; and Satan maketh their works fairseeming unto them, and debarreth them from the way (of Truth), so that they do not aright;
25. So that they worship not Allah, Who bringeth forth the hidden in the heavens and the earth, and knoweth what ye hide and what ye proclaim,
26. Allah; there is no God save him, the Lord of the Tremendous Throne.
27. (Solomon) said: We shall see whether thou speakest truth or whether thou art of the liars.
28. Go with this my letter and throw it down unto them; then turn away and see what (answer) they return,
29. (The Queen of Sheba) said (when she received the letter): O chieftains! Lo! there hath been thrown unto me a noble letter.
30. Lo! it is from Solomon, and lo! it is: In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful;
31. Exalt not yourselves against me, but come unto me as those who surrender.
32. She said: O chieftains! Pronounce for me my case. I decide no case till ye are present with me.
33. They said: We are lords of might and lords of great

prowess, but it is for thee to command; so consider what thou wilt command.
34. She said: Lo! kings, when they enter a township, ruin it and make the honour of its people shame. Thus will they do.
35. But lo! I am going to send a present unto them, and to see what (answer) the messengers return.
36. So when (the envoy) came unto Solomon, (the King) said: What! Would ye help me with wealth? But that which Allah hath given me is better than that which He hath given you. Nay it is ye (and not I) who exult in your gift.
37. Return to them. We verily shall come unto them with hosts that they cannot resist, and we shall drive them out from thence with shame, and they will be abased.
38. He said: O chiefs! Which of you will bring me her throne before they come unto me, surrendering?
39. A stalwart of the jinn said: I will bring it thee before thou canst rise from thy place. Lo! I verily am strong and trusty for such work.
40. One with whom was knowledge of the Scripture said: I will bring it thee before thy gaze returneth unto thee. And when he saw it set in his presence, (Solomon) said: This is of the bounty of my Lord, that He may try me whether I give thanks or am ungrateful. Whosoever giveth thanks he only giveth thanks for (the good of) his own soul; and whosoever is ungrateful (is ungrateful to his own soul's hurt). For lo! my Lord is absolute in independence, Bountiful.
41. He said: Disguise her throne for her that we may see whether she will go aright or be of those not rightly guided.
42. So, when she came, it was said (unto her): Is thy throne like this? She said: (It is) as though it were the very one. And (Solomon said): We are given the knowledge before her and we had surrendered (to Allah).
43. And (all) that she was wont to worship instead of Allah hindered her, for she came of disbelieving folk.
44. It was said unto her: Enter the hall. And when she saw it she deemed it a pool and bared her legs. (Solomon) said: Lo! it is a hall, made smooth, of glass. She said: My Lord! Lo! I have wronged myself, and I surrender with Solomon unto Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

This passage in the Holy Qur'ān presents King Solomon holding court with powers over both jinn and birds that he has mustered. He notices that the hoopoe, a colorful, passerine bird similar to a kingfisher or a bee-eater, the crest of which is erectile and whose trisyllabic call, "oop-oop-oop," accounts for its onomatopoeic name, is not present. In Islamic folklore, the hoopoe is regarded as the talking manifestation of the wind and, like the wind, is thought to be able to cover great distances in the shortest imaginable time.

The hoopoe appears and informs King Solomon that he has just returned from Sheba, which here appears to be the name of a region because the hoopoe continues his narrative by alluding to its ruler, an unnamed, powerful woman holding sway over a realm possessed of an abundance of all things. As the Queen of Sheba enters the hall of King Solomon, she encounters a pool and bares her legs, the purpose of which will be elaborated upon by later generations.

This encounter between an unnamed queen and King Solomon in the Holy Qur'ān introduces the name of her realm, Sheba; reinforces earlier assessments about its geographic remoteness from Jerusalem; and mentions the baring of her legs. The baring of the queen's legs is not without import. Folklore of the Islamic world maintains that King Solomon, desirous of catching a glimpse of the Queen of Sheba's legs, devised a trick by which he fooled the queen into thinking that, upon entering his hall, she was about to wade into a pool of water. The queen, in order to avoid getting her costume wet, apparently pulled up her garment and thereby inadvertently exposed her legs. In the Islamic folktale, this queen is named Bilqīs.

Philologists (those who specialize in the study of languages) maintain that most languages obey laws of grammar and syntax, and can further demonstrate how words can, though altered, pass from one language into another. The study of such verbal transformations is the discipline of etymology, the study of the historically documented change of particular words and their derivation.

The Queen, named Sheba, as recorded in Psalm 72:10, is also known as Bilqīs in Islamic folklore. This name

appears to relate, etymologically, to a name of this same queen as recorded by the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus. In chapter 2 of his eighth book in *Jewish Antiquities*, published in AD 93–94, he wrote:

I suppose also that Herodotus of Halicarnassus, when he said there were three hundred and thirty kings of Egypt after Menes, who built Memphis, did therefore not tell us their names, because they were in common called Pharaohs; for when after their death there was a queen reigned, he calls her by her name Nicaule, as thereby declaring, that while the kings were of the male line, and so admitted of the same nature, while a woman did not admit the same, he did therefore set down that her name, which she could not naturally have. As for myself, I have discovered from our own books, that after Pharaoh, the father-in-law of Solomon, no other king of Egypt did any longer use that name; and that it was after that time when the forenamed queen of Egypt and Ethiopia came to Solomon, concerning whom we shall inform the reader presently; but I have now made mention of these things, that I may prove that our books and those of the Egyptians agree together in many things.

Josephus informs us that the name of the queen who visited King Solomon was Nicaule, which is sometimes rendered in English as Nikaulis. These forms of her name are the English renderings for a name of suggested Greek origin that is philologically represented as *ΝΘΩΛΗ/*ΝΘΩΛΨΣ. This presumed Greek name appears to relate to the personal name Onokole, or Onokolis, used for a female demon in *Frogs* by the ancient Greek comic playwright Aristophanes (ca. 460–386 BC), and which itself may be of Hebrew or Aramaic origin. According to philologists, therefore, the name Nikaulis in Josephus and that of Bilqīs recorded in Islamic folklore as the name of the Queen of Sheba are derived from one and the same root, and can be diagrammed as follows: [Onokolis] *ΝΘΩΛΨΣ [=Nikaulis] > *ΒΘΩΛΨΣ > *ΒΘΛΨΣ > ΒΛΘΨΣ [= Bilqīs]

Another connection is the name Onokole/Onokolis as found in Aristophanes, *Frogs*, in which it is used as the nickname for a female demon named Empusa. This demon is portrayed in that play as "a donkey-legged woman," which is the literal English meaning of the Greek name Onokole/Onokolis.

Over time, the association of the name Onokolis with that of Bilqīs, and the knowledge that the name Onokolis was associated with a woman with donkey feet, was creatively stitched to the Qur'ānic narrative of King Solomon mustering jinn immediately before the arrival of the Queen of Sheba. Accordingly, Islamic folklore suggests that advisers to King Solomon believed that the Queen of Sheba now entering his realm was not a beautiful woman but a rival female devil, and they were fearful that he would come under her spell. Consequently, they devised a stratagem to force the queen to expose her legs by compelling her to walk into a pool, which in some versions of the account was a sheet of glass. In the end, King Solomon was convinced that the Queen of Sheba was indeed a beautiful woman, but some versions of the tale continue to maintain that the Queen of Sheba possessed excessively hairy legs. So, for example, she is often depicted in this very way in illuminated Persian manuscripts of the 16th century, and as goat-legged in the folklore of the Copts.

During the Middle Ages, which were dominated by intense scholasticism, learned clerics attempted to unite various elements of both the Old and New Testament into common narratives. One such attempt was the "Story of the True Cross," recorded in *Legenda Aurea*, or *Golden Legend*, by Jacopo da Varazze, Bishop of Genoa, in the 13th century. Here one learns that King Solomon decided to make use of an enormous trunk, taken from a tree that, according to tradition, sprung from the body of Adam from a seed which came from the Garden of Eden's Tree of Life. The Archangel Michael had given this seed to Seth, Adam's son, who planted it in his dead father's mouth. As manipulated by King Solomon, worked blocks would form immediately as soon as the miraculous trunk touched them.

While this construction was under way, King Solomon was informed that the Queen of Sheba was journeying to Jerusalem, and that one of her feet was in the form of a monstrous hoof of a goat. King Solomon, in preparation for her arrival, flooded the entire esplanade of his court. The miraculous tree trunk, having fallen on the esplanade, sunk to the bottom of the water. When she arrived, the Queen of Sheba, unable to conceal her hoof, waded into the pool and inadvertently bumped into the submerged trunk, which immediately transformed her goat's hoof into a human leg. The esplanade was drained and the miraculous trunk placed in the Temple.

There is a variation of this account in the "Story of the Wood of the True Cross," which ascribes to the Queen of Sheba prophetic powers in keeping with the Byzantine tradition that regards her as a sibyl. On her way to the palace of King Solomon in Jerusalem, the queen encountered water, perhaps in the form of a stream or brook, over which the miraculous tree trunk is hastily placed, extending from bank to bank, to serve as an impromptu bridge for the convenience of the queen. She refused to step onto it, however; instead she fell to her knees and began to worship it. She sensed that the trunk came from the tree that Seth had planted in the mouth of his deceased father, Adam, and her inner voice informed her that this would be the very wood used to build the cross on which the savior of the world would one day hang. She informed King Solomon of her experience, and he buried the miraculous trunk in the bottom of the stream. (The episode of the queen kneeling before the tree trunk has been admirably captured in a vignette by the Italian artist Piero della Francesca in his pictorial cycle *The Legend of the True Cross* from about 1455, which he painted in the Church of San Francesco in Arezzo, Italy.)

This story gains an added twist, particularly in the folklore of central Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries. In this tale of the Queen of Sheba's encounter with the pool of King Solomon she is referred to as the "web-footed queen"—*la reine pedauque*, in French—as if her feet were those of a goose or a duck.

The legend of the Queen of Sheba and her encounter with King Solomon still fascinates the West, and artists continue to portray this theme to the present day.

The Incense Road

Antonietta Catanzeriti

Facing page: Map of ancient trade routes used to supply the Mediterranean area with luxury items from the 3rd century BC through the 2nd century AD. The land route (shown in red) from the southeastern shore of Arabia carried frankincense and myrrh to Petra and Gaza in the north was known as the Incense Road. It was also used to carry silks from China and spices, cotton, and gemstones from India that were brought to southern Arabian ports. Sea routes used are indicated in blue.

Incense played an integral role in many ancient religions, as well as in the domestic life of the upper classes. As urban populations grew—and sanitary practices lagged—the burning of incense and the use of perfumes were not only a luxury but a necessity to cleanse the air for special events and religious rituals. The Greek historian Herodotus (484–425 BC) reports that Arabia was the only place where the fragrances frankincense, myrrh, cassia, cinnamon, and labdanum were produced. In his writing he romanticized frankincense and myrrh and told of snakes "small in size, and various in colors, and great in numbers who keep guard over all the trees which bear frankincense, and the only way to get rid of them is by smoking them with storax" (*Histories* III, 108; see Selingcourt, 1954). Pliny the Elder (AD 23–79) in his *Natural History* (see Rackham, 1954) describes frankincense and myrrh as the principal products of the incense trade that brought wealth to South Arabia and gave Yemen its epithet, *Arabia Felix*—Happy Arabia.

The Greek philosopher Theophrastus (372–287 BC) described the straggly incense trees and how they grew "partly in the mountains, partly on private estates at the foot of the mountains, wherefore some are under cultivation, others not" (*Natural History* XII, 70; see Hort, 1916). He noticed the trees growing in various areas, including Saba', Ḥaḍramawt, Qatabān, and Ma'īn, and he reported that the first harvest of the resins of the frankincense trees took place between April and July. (Pliny later documented that a second season had been added at the end of the winter period in response to the increased demand.)

Frankincense was originally known as *libany*, a Sabaic name that was later incorporated into the Syrian, Mesopotamian, and Greek languages. According to both literary sources and archaeological findings, frankincense arrived in the Near East from South Arabia during the 7th century BC. It is a resin found in several varieties of trees known by the generic name boswellia. Frankincense was used in ancient Egypt in the 3rd millennium BC. Boswellia trees are depicted on a relief (ca. 2450–2350 BC) from the Old Kingdom (now in Berlin, Egyptian Museum, 3/65), but the best known representations are part of the decoration of Queen Hatshepsut's funerary temple (ca. 1470 BC) in Deir el-Bahari, Thebes. The scenes are of her expedition to the "land of the gods," which the Egyptians called Punt and which probably encompassed Ethiopia, Somalia, and the South Arabian coast.

Myrrh likewise is a resin collected from trees. The trees from which myrrh is taken are sturdy, with knotted branches that grow up to nine feet long and that have sharp spikes at the end. The name *myrrh* derives from the Semitic word *murr*, meaning bitter. Pliny speaks of different kinds of myrrh based on their places of origin and mentions those from Ma'īn, Qatabān, and Ḥaḍramawt. He goes on to say that, "broadly speaking . . . the proof of goodness is given by its being in small pieces of irregular shape, forming in the solidifying of the juice as it turns and dries up, and in its showing white marks like fingernails when it is broken, and having a slightly bitter taste. The second best kind is mottled inside, and the worst is the one that is black inside; and if it is black outside as well it is of a still more inferior quality" (*Natural History* XII, 34). Myrrh is harvested as a pale yellow liquid that solidifies into a red-brown mass; its quality is determined by its darkness, clarity, and stickiness. In ancient Egypt it was called *'Antju*; it is recorded on the Palermo Stone (a list of royal names, which also mentions special events; see Sethe [1904], 246) during the reign of the Fifth Dynasty king Sahure (ca. 2490 BC). Queen Hatshepsut (1479–1457 BC) likewise imported such plants from the land of Punt. During the New Kingdom period (late 16th–11th century BC), most of the myrrh and frankincense arrived in Egypt through Syria.

In addition to frankincense and myrrh, gum-labdanum, cassia, and other plants were also traded. Four types of cassia are known: cassia, the bark of *Cinnamomum iners,* from Arabia and Ethiopia; cinnamon proper, the bark of *Cinnamomum malabathrum,* from India, and *Cinnamomum aromaticum,* from China. Another important plant was *Soqotra Aloe,* also called *Aloe Vera*, which grew on the island of Soqotra about 300 miles off the coast of Ḥaḍramawt and

was exported from the Qāni'. The juice extracted from its leaves is known for its healing properties, and in ancient times it was also used in funeral rites. From the same island came Dragon's Blood, or so-called Indian cinnabar, which is a reddish resin that takes its name from a curious ancient legend. Pliny wrote that *kinnabari* is "the thick matter which issues from the dragon when crushed beneath the weight of the dying elephant" (see Breton [1998], 62-63). Indian cinnabar was used in the Mediterranean world as both a drug and a dye.

Frankincense and myrrh had many uses, both together and separately. They were blended with other ingredients to create perfumes. Egyptian women used frankincense ashes to make kohl which was used as an eyeliner. Myrrh was used in an ointment for rituals, especially embalming; pellets of frankincense were found in King Tutankhamen's tomb (ca. 1325 BC). Turkish healers prescribed myrrh as an aphrodisiac, and both resins were used to protect against sorcery. Arabic doctors mixed myrrh with vinegar as a cure for baldness, and English alchemists recommended frankincense for prolonging life. Even today some metal foundries continue the medieval tradition of blessing a new bell by burning myrrh and frankincense inside it.

There are a host of other uses as well. The Egyptian Papyrus Ebers, housed in the university library of Leipzig and likely the oldest list of medical prescriptions in the world (ca. 1500 BC), describes priests using both resins not only for mummification, but also for treating wounds and skin sores. They were expensive luxury goods but were considered indispensable for attaining the favor of the gods. At religious feasts, festivals, and rituals honoring kings, incense was burned, and priests carried incense burners in rites and processions.

Pliny the Elder and the anonymous writer of *The Periplus of the Eritrean Sea,* a manual on navigation dating to the 1st century AD, describe the land and sea routes used by the ancient Arabians in the incense trade (see Groom [1981], 77-95). Shabwa, the capital of Ḥaḍramawt, where

most of the frankincense and myrrh was grown, was the point of convergence for most trails and therefore the principal trading center. It offered pasturage and water for animals at its oasis. From Dhofār an overland route led traders to Shabwa, which could also be reached by the coastal route from the port Qāni' and via Mayfa'a. This route continued to Timna', the capital of Qatabān. In 210 BC, the construction of the mountain pass, Mablaqah, to Timna' provided a shortcut to Mārib and Najrān. From Najrān the caravans left for Petra, capital of the Nabataean kingdom, and Gaza, the main port that distributed the goods to the Mediterranean world. The journey to Gaza or Petra took between sixty and eighty days and included sixty-five dromedary stops, according to Pliny. On the Persian Gulf, the merchants in the port of Gerrha controlled the transport of incense across Arabia and into the Mediterranean and therefore controlled as well the aromatics' trade with Babylon, especially during the 1st century BC.

The dromedary played a key role in transporting aromatics between South Arabia and the Near East. Images of dromedary riders in calcite-alabaster with Sabaean inscriptions have been found in Shabwa. Although we cannot exactly date when the dromedary trade route first began, the route to South Arabia through Hijaz and Asir probably was not established before the middle of the 7th century BC.

The sea route existed long before the land routes and certainly before the establishment of the South Arabian kingdoms. During Roman times it was used more once sailors discovered that the monsoon winds changed direction in June and again in November. As many as 150 large ships a year would ply the waters to India and back during the reign of Augustus, carrying spices, gemstones, wild animals for the arenas, cotton textiles, and silks from China. According to *The Periplus* and Pliny's writings, the most important port along the Red Sea coast was the port of Mouza, then under the aegis of the Ḥimyarites, from which merchants traded with the African ports. Mouza ultimately replaced the port of Aden as the principal stopover port. For aromatics the Romans traded metals, textiles, wine, oil, and grain. On the South Arabian coast the principal ports were Qāni' and Moscha. Qāni', in particular, traded with Romans in Egypt and with ports in Africa, southern Iran, as well as India. Frankincense was always the principal product for exchange.

During the 1st century AD the demand for frankincense and myrrh increased markedly. The difficulty and duration of the trip by either land or sea were responsible for the high price of the Arabian spices in western markets, a cost made higher still by shipping costs across the Mediterranean and by the markup added by intermediate merchants. Roman citizens paid six denarii a pound for good quality frankincense—an amount that was more than most Romans earned in a fortnight. Myrrh as an ingredient of perfume and as incense was often worth more than its weight in gold. In Rome myrrh cost five times more than frankincense, though the latter was more popular. A pound of myrrh sold from eleven to sixteen denarii (*Natural History* XII, 51–70). The Incense Road served as a conduit for trading other goods such as ebony, ivory, and slaves from Africa, rare woods, feathers, and gemstones from India, and silk from China.

Much later, al-Mukhā, the port city of the Tihāma (a narrow coastal lowland region of Arabia on the Red Sea), became an important trading place; across the Red Sea it faces the area of Ethiopia known as Kaffa—from which coffee, both the word and the beverage, originate. Because the Arabs controlled the coffee trade through al-Mukhā beginning in the 15th century, the name *mocha* became synonymous with coffee, and even today it is used to describe the chocolate-flavored variant.

In ancient times the incense trade was extremely profitable. Exported by sea from Dhofār, or overland by dromedary via al-Madīna to Petra, Damascus, Aleppo, and Palmyra, frankincense brought prosperity to South Arabia. The fragrance was also the basis of the economy of Oman's Dhofār province for more than 2,000 years, peaking during the 1st–2nd centuries AD when King 'Ilī'adh Yalut (ca. 50 BC) of the Ḥaḍramawt regulated the incense-producing areas and built the port of Sumhuram (Samhar), thereby securing a monopoly for the frankincense trade. In the Near East two other important civilizations, the Nabataeans and the

Palmyrenes, profited greatly from the trade of the Incense Road. The Nabataeans were located where the Incense Road from Arabia to Damascus intersected the overland route from India to Egypt. Until 24 BC the Nabataeans supported large caravans of frankincense, myrrh, and other incenses from South Arabia as well as spices from India and beyond to the Mediterranean ports of Gaza and Alexandria. Palmyra, because of its location, controlled and provided security for all of the Syrian desert routes, while its elite dromedary corps provided transportation. Palmyra's merchants established permanent trading facilities in Babylonia and on the Persian Gulf. Some of them went as far as India.

The production and the transportation of incense were critical to the economy of ancient South Arabia, but the population itself also made considerable use of the precious resins. Archaeologists have discovered countless incense burners in this region, many of which bear inscriptions that provide not only the name of an owner but sometimes also the names of types of incense used, including woods and resins such as *kmkm* (*kankamon*) and *drw* (*tarum*) of the mastic tree, and *qlm* (*calamus*), which is probably camel grass (*Cybopagon citrates*). The incense burners were commonly made from metal, stone, or pottery, and their shapes varied widely.

The caravan trade was essential for the prosperity of the cities, which depended in turn on a stable political climate among the kingdoms located along the entire route. The cities received taxes up to one tenth of the value of the transported goods, and it was strictly forbidden to bypass them. As their wealth grew so did their need for security. This revenue enabled cities to build sophisticated dams and irrigation systems, walls for protection against invasion, and temples to serve as spiritual centers.

The incense trade reached its peak during Hellenistic and early Roman times. The civilizations it served used huge amounts of frankincense and myrrh. Herodotus described the burning of 2,189 jars and 304,093 bushels of incense during a single ceremony in the 5th century BC. However, because of various factors, the incense trade decreased after the 3rd century AD. This period saw a general decline in the prosperity of the Roman Empire, due in part to a decrease in the amount of money in circulation as a result of the huge sums that were paid out to buy grain from abroad and hire Teutonic tribes as mercenaries. Then, too, there were the Roman-Persian wars, that resulted in the rise of the Sasanian Empire and the loss of Rome's Near Eastern trading depots in the north. Finally, the South Arabian city-states themselves fell into decline as much of the luxury trade was now being carried by ship. As a consequence, the use of frankincense and myrrh decreased significantly.

In modern times synthetic incenses have sounded the final death knell for the South Arabian incense trade, particularly those that were developed during the mid-1940s. Frankincense and myrrh continue to be used today in many Arab countries, but only to sustain local needs. Most of the existing frankincense trade is in the hands of the Bayt Kathir and, to a lesser degree, the al-Mahra tribes. The best frankincense trees grow in their territories in the desert plateau above Salālah. However, few people are willing to do the difficult work of collecting the resin: bark must be cut by hand and four-inch-long strips removed. As the resin forms and dries, it turns from white to amber and is harvested a week later as "teardrops" that are sold in the *suqs* (markets) and to the shopkeepers in the Ḥaḍramawt region, especially in Tarīm, Shibām, Say'ūn, and Mukalla. Here incense still plays a role in every phase of Yemeni life. A mixture of boswellia and other aromatics such as storax, benzoin, myrrh, sandalwood, and agalloch is burned in traditional incense burners called "miqtara," which are made of terra-cotta and are decorated with triple-colored stripes. Many Yemeni continue to believe that incense protects newborns against the evil eye. It is also burned at weddings and funerals. Clearly, in the birthplace of frankincense ancient cultic practices survive, reflecting the continuing need that modern man has for these aromatics.

Regine Schulz

Gods and Rituals in Ancient South Arabia

The deities of the ancient South Arabian kingdoms were numerous, regional, and variable in their functions and importance, and they were of both sexes. The inhabitants of these kingdoms believed that divine forces could provide protection and supernatural support, and they took special interest in those divinities that could guarantee success in agriculture and irrigation to ensure that their oasis and wadi cultivation projects were not endangered by lack of rainfall.

Some deities played a patronizing role, and the worshipers saw themselves as "children" of their god. The national patron of the Sabaeans was the moon god 'Almaqah; he was related to a female sun goddess, dhāt-Ḥimyam or dhāt-Ba'danum, and was later replaced by Shamsum and the deities 'Athtar and Hawbas. The patron of the Qatabāneans was 'Amm, whose name can be translated as "uncle," and the Qatabānean ruler was seen as the "first-born" of 'Amm's divine companions 'Anbay and Ḥawkam. The national god of the Minaeans was the moon god Wadd, and that of the Ḥaḍramites was Sayīn, who may have been a solar deity.

The main temple of each of these gods was the ritual center of the state. For the Sabaeans this was the 'Awwām temple of 'Almaqah (called also Maḥram Bilqīs) in Mārib, where religious festivals were important events. The temples were wealthy and possessed large estates. Tithes were collected, public work required, and military campaigns carried out in the name of the divine patron. Besides these national protectors, there were countless tutelary gods, spirits, and worshiped ancestors. All of these supernatural beings were essential to daily life, as it was their responsibility to protect special places, villages, clans, or individuals. The Roman historian Pliny the Elder reports that Shabwa alone had sixty-seven shrines, and Timna' sixty-five (*Natural History* VI.32, 154–156; see Rackham, 1954).

Rituals and ritual objects abounded. Altars were used for burning incense and for pouring blood of slaughtered animals or other liquids. Prayers and offerings were essential for ongoing communication with the gods. The most frequent offerings were animals, food, milk, wine, and aromatics, but also used were ritual objects such as stelae and statues, and even buildings. Some people gave all of their possessions, and sometimes even themselves and their families, to the service of a god or temple. A text from Shabwa tells of a man offering "his soul, his faculties, his children, his goods, the light of his eyes and the thoughts of his heart, trusting in divine protection" to the Ḥaḍramite patron god Sayīn. Worshipers believed that the gods could speak directly to them in either visions or dreams, and they consulted priests for interpretations of oracles, who instructed them about when and where rituals, especially sacrifices, were to be performed. In addition to the many national and local gods, one principal deity was worshiped in all South Arabia: 'Athtar, called 'Astar in Ḥaḍramawt. With a name so similar to the Mesopotamian Venus goddess Ishtar and to the Syro-Palestine Astarte, he likely was associated with the planet of the same name. In addition, his epithet "the Eastern god" suggests the morning position of Venus. 'Athtar was the god of the thunderstorm and was associated with the ritual hunt, both of which were considered important for the production of rain and for fecundity.

Although we know the names and epithets of many of the gods, as well as their role in numerous sacred places, no inscriptions have been found that tell us about their mythology or the relations between the deities. We do know, however, the relation of the gods to water and irrigation. A hymn to the sun goddess Shams 'Aliyyat from the late 1st or early 2nd century AD was discovered in the Wādī Qānīya, where it is incised in twenty-seven lines on a rock wall. It addresses her as an all-powerful deity and conveys thanks and requests for matters such as protection, support, justice, and food. However, the most important issue is water, which is mentioned in five verses. The last lines of the hymn read: "You have aided us, Oh Shams, for it is You who have provided the rain, and we beseech You that with constant rain your people may be anointed" (Hoyland [2001], 211).

The Awwām temple near Mārib, which is today called Maḥram Bilqīs (Queen of Sheba)*, was dedicated to the god 'Almaqah. The temple was the religious center of the Sabaean kingdom.*

Temples and Shrines

The earliest temples and shrines to South Arabian deities were built in the 4th and 3rd millennia BC, and have been found on both the African and the Arabian sides of the Red Sea. An example is Hajar al-Ghaymah in the Wādī Hamili. Here monolithic pillars are arranged in circles, to which processional roads lead. Monolithic monuments were built in the oasis al-Maidaman on the South Arabian coast in the 3rd and 2nd millennium BC. These huge stones weigh approximately twenty tons each and had to have been transported from quarries miles away. Although the design of these temples changed with time, monolithic pillars continued to be used until the 5th century BC.

During the Formative and Classical Periods (700 BC– AD 100), temples in Saba', Ma'īn, and Qatabān had roofs with supporting pillars. These temples were built both inside and outside the cities; some of those outside the cities served as centers of pilgrimage. Although temples differed slightly, there were several basic types. One type that developed during the 8th or 7th century BC had massive external walls, a large portal, pillared halls, and a sanctuary complex. Some of these had an open central court with colonnades, and others, from the 5th century BC on, featured a massive staircase leading to an elevated platform with a propylaeum (gateway) and a sanctuary complex. A second type was built both inside and outside city walls. It had rows of pillars and architraves, which carried a roof to form a hall. Smaller temples had only two rows, each with

three pillars, like the city temple of Ma'īn; larger temples had many rows of pillars like the temple of al-Baydā', which had eleven rows, each with ten pillars. A third type was built in the Ḥaḍramawt; this had a sanctuary with a long, massive staircase like that of Makaynun, which was sixty-eight meters long.

Offerings, invocations, and penance prayers were carried out in these temples and shrines. The celebration of the sacred hunt was held in a select few, as were special feasts and festivals.

Tombs and Funerary Customs

The ancient South Arabians strongly believed in an afterlife, and the tomb and its funerary furnishings were considered important to the deceased. The cemeteries were situated mostly outside the walls of the caravan cities that grew out of the incense trade, and were near the temples that guaranteed their gods' protection. The 'Awwām temple at Mārib and the temple of Wadd dhū-Masma' in the Wādī Qutūta both had large cemeteries. The necropolis of Mārib alone contains 20,000–30,000 burials.

The integrity of the burials themselves was essential to the deceased. Graves were protected by inscribed curses on would-be grave robbers or, in some instances, by astonishingly elaborate and varied small mortuary temples that were built for individual graves. The burials varied from site to site and from period to period. For example, during one period the deceased were interred in a flexed position, and during another they were laid out unbent. Many were wrapped, and from time to time attempts were made at mummification. The internment itself varied as well, with some graves for single bodies, some for whole families, and yet others for multiple burials of a clan.

In addition to the great city cemeteries there were also other, smaller burial sites. One type was the tomb tower cemetery. These were situated along the caravan routes, far from any city, and may have served for the burials of caravan merchants themselves. Here some of the bodies were mummified, and researchers believe that they were brought from far away. Another type of burial was the rock cut tombs of the highlands, like those near Shibām al-Ghirās. The rock tombs usually had one or two rooms, and some had alcoves for the deceased with doors like those found near Yarim, Ṣana'ā', Kawkabān, and Dhamār. Other cemeteries consisted of cave tombs like those near Raybūn and Ḥurayḍha, which were used for family members over several generations. Finally, the cemeteries of Timna' and Mārib included above-ground tombs that had several levels for multiple burials. These structures made up a necropolis with small streets and probably a surrounding wall. Images of the deceased were placed in front of the tombs or in the entrance halls, and attached inscriptions gave their names. Many burials of the wealthy also contained objects like statues, stelae, articles of use or decoration, food offerings, liquids, aromatics, and, occasionally, the bones of a camel or other domestic animal.

The Figurative Arts

The figurative and decorative art of ancient South Arabia evolved over a period of at least 1,200 years. Indigenous types and styles developed, although some ideas may have been inspired by the cultures of trading partners, particularly during the early centuries of the present era, when the art became progressively influenced by Hellenistic and Roman imagery. It is now the concensus of well-informed opinion that South Arabian art stylistically falls within four main periods: the Pre-Formative Period (ca. 13th–8th century BC), the Formative Period (ca. 7th–5th century BC), the Classical Period (also called the Mature Period; ca. 4th century BC–1st century AD), and the Late Period (2nd–5th century AD).

South Arabian sculptors worked primarily with stone, particularly calcite-alabaster and limestone, although bronze and clay were also used. In addition to sculptors, South Arabia must also have had talented wood carvers, gold- and silversmiths, and gemstone cutters, because ancient historians such as Diodorus Siculus (80–29 BC) report that palaces were lavishly decorated with marvelous gold, silver, ivory, wood, and gemstones. Few gold and silver works have survived, however.

Images of the Divine

Astoundingly, in contrast to other ancient cultures, figures of the gods are not a part of the ancient South Arabian religious artistic tradition. One exception is the recently discovered bas-reliefs of the temple at as-Sadwā' in the Jawf region. These are closely related to Assyrian art, and have representations of human-shaped South Arabian deities (for a preliminary report on the survey by Rémy Audoin and Mounir Arbach, see Kadike 2006). Sacred places are usually architectural elements like niches, false windows, and friezes, and deities themselves are indicated by astrological figures such as the sun and crescent moon as well as animals. Most important of these animals were ibexes, bulls, and antelopes, and to a lesser extent, lions, serpents, and eagles. Some of these animals relate to the sacred hunt, a ritual to honor the patron gods and to induce them to grant water, rich harvests, and fertility. The ibex is not related to a specific god and may represent nature's vital energy and the power of the wild (see Calvet/Robin, [1997], 73; Avanzini [2005], 144). Using ibexes in a frieze or frame of a stela may convey control over nature. The epithet "God of ibexes" is used only for the principal gods, such as 'Almaqah of Saba' and 'Amm of Qatabān. The second most popular animal is the bull, which appears as a whole figure or head (*bucranium*) and often is an integral part of a stela or an offering plate. The bull is related to several deities, including the Sabaean god 'Almaqah, the god of the Jawf region Sami', or the Ḥaḍramite god Sayīn. In each instance the bull likely symbolizes renewal and regeneration (see Calvet/Robin 1997, 72–73) and is represented as such in funerary contexts. Another important animal is the oryx antelope, the head of which is frequently presented in frontal view. Sometimes these heads are found associated with ibexes and together probably provide a protective as well as decorative function. The oryx is associated with several gods, including 'Athtar and 'Almaqah, and, like the ibex, is related to the sacred hunt. It must have had great power, because it is usually found on the top of a frame or stelae. Other bronze or clay animal representations served completely different functions; for example, those of camels and horses were indicators of the owner's wealth and are not a symbol for a deity.

Few images are considered to be possible representations of gods. Those that have a raised hand and outwardly facing palm are usually interpreted as giving an oath or a blessing. One that has been discussed as possibly the goddess dhāt-Ḥimyam is in this collection (see pl. 29). However, there is no iconographic or textual evidence to support the conclusion that the female is a goddess. The inscription is a man's name, therefore a priestess who intercedes on behalf of the donor seems more likely. By the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, the burgeoning cultural exchange with the Greco-Roman world brought bronze statuettes of foreign deities to South Arabia, and these were donated to the local gods; examples are the bronze figures discovered at Jabal el-Lawd. In addition, local workshops began to adapt Greco-Roman iconography and style, and foreign artists may have come to Yemen. As a result of outside influence, new iconographic elements and figures became popular, such as cherubs and fabulous creatures, grape leaves and grapes, and an unnamed goddess (pl. 30). These changes may have been brought by immigrants from the north after the 1st century AD, the time during which Greco-Roman culture disseminated throughout the ancient world.

Representations of People

The earliest human-shaped figures date from the 3rd and 2nd millennium BC. They are of men and women with triangular faces and long noses: their arms are bent and are resting in front of their chest, with their hands close together. In the 1st millennium BC so-called forefather figures appear. These figures have faces that are triangular in shape with prominent noses and small mouths. They are either seated or standing, and have arms extended in front of their bodies. Some characteristics of these early figures, such as their compactness of form, position of arms, and long, thin noses, influenced the sculpture of later periods.

The figures of the Formative and Classical Periods are standardized, particularly the three-dimensional stone

sculptures; works in bronzes and clay varied more. The two basic types of stone statues are seated and standing figures, both with extended arms; some stelae have busts or heads and are nearly three dimensional. Other stelae portray their owners in activities, like participating in a sacred hunt or riding a camel, and some include subordinate figures. The stelae depict persons in frontal view, profile, or a combination of both.

Many of these stylistic conventions were modified or given up entirely in the Late Period, when typological and stylistic elements of the Greco-Roman world became popular. Bronze sculptures in particular followed these new tendencies and adopted new themes, postures, and gestures. In addition, bronzes from the Hellenistic and Roman world were imported to South Arabia and were dedicated to the local gods. We know that, at least on one occasion, Greco-Roman and South Arabian artisans worked together. The life-size statues of the Ḥimyarite kings Dhamar' alī Yuhabirr and Tha'rān were ordered from an artist named Phokas, but they were joined and overworked by a South Arabian founder named Lahay'amm. This fact is mentioned in an inscription on the knees of a statue of Tha'rān: "Phokas made it" is written on the left knee in Greek, and "Lahay'amm has assembled it" on the right knee in South Arabian script. Architectural elements were also adorned with Graeco-Roman motifs, such as grapes, grape leaves, and mythical beasts (pl. 31); one example displays not only fabulous creatures, but also a human-shaped goddess (pl. 30).

Free-standing stone sculpture was more resistant to these foreign influences. The basic types remained constant; only hairstyles and costumes change.

Faces for Eternity

Placing heads made of calcite-alabaster in niches built into the upper part of stelae was common practice in the Sabaean culture from the second half of the 1st millennium BC to the early centuries of the present era. Some of the niches had doors and were not always accessible, so presumably those heads were used only in commemorative rituals on special days. In the Qatabānean culture, heads were mounted on a base (see pl. 19) and displayed in the vestibules of burial chambers. The heads themselves were idealized portraits of the deceased and sex was usually indicated by beards for men (see pl. 1, 9, 17) and hair locks for women (see pl. 2–4). They were inscribed with the given and clan names of the deceased and the last letter of a given name could also indicate whether or not the deceased was a woman.

The heads themselves evolved from simple stelae during the Formative Period that had stylized eyes or faces in low relief (pl. 1) to more sophisticated three-dimensional heads during the Classical Period (for example, see pl. 19). Workshops in different regions developed their own traditional types, but identification of workshops is often impossible when provenance is uncertain, as it frequently is. Recent excavations may help resolve this problem, especially those that can date heads that have been recovered from Ḥayd ibn 'Aqīl, the cemetery of the Qatabānean capital Timna', and those from a mausoleum near the east wall of the 'Awwām Temple, the ritual center of the Sabaeans at Mārib.

The stelae or stelae with heads are placed on their own bases which may in turn fit into a second base, which bears the given and clan names of the deceased. Because the heads and stelae in their rectangular niches faced the viewer, only their fronts were visible and required polishing. This polishing enhances the translucent appearance of the alabaster, while other surfaces are left rough or partially worked. The top and back of the heads are flattened to fit in the rectangular space, and plaster is used to secure them in their niches and occasionally to add hair.

Some heads are fully three dimensional, while others are a part of stelae in high relief. Some heads have a modeled top, while others are flattened at the hairline. More type-specific are the facial proportions, which can be expressed as the ratios of the measurements of the forehead to the nose/cheeks and to the mouth/chin sections, and the stylization of the eyes, ears, and nose. Facial shapes are less type-specific. Essential for the recognition of works created by a specific workshop are such features as degree of modeling, incisions, inlays, and painting, in addition to the overall artistic design.

Although there are typological and stylistic similarities, every sculpture is different, and there appear to be no copies of prototypes. The features of the deceased may be a reason for some of the variation, though the faces of the heads do not have to be a precise portrayal of the deceased, because the deceased is identified by his given and clan names on the stela, integral slab, or base.

Figures of Worshipers and Ritualists

The variety of free-standing human-shaped statues within the corpus of ancient South Arabian sculpture is astonishingly limited. From the Formative to the Classical Period the sculpture represented specific individuals; they are either standing or sitting similar to the statuettes of the Pre-formative Period. The standing and seated statues of the later periods have their feet even and apart. Their arms are bent at the elbows, with their forearms and hands extending forward (see pl. 12, 20).

Raised relief images on stelae are more variable and feature individuals with arms across their chests or hands that touch one another (see pl. 26), a well-known pictorial stance in ancient Near Eastern art. There is a third gesture: one hand is raised near the face, the palm facing outward, while the other hand holds an attribute (see pl. 28, 29). These three gestures commemorate rituals, presumably performed by or for the donor. Statuettes with wide-open eyes that look forward and arms that are extended are establishing contact with a deity. Statuettes with eyes looking forward and with hands touching one another in front of the chest may be praying, an act that identifies them as worshipers. Figures with one hand raised typically have the other hand holding an attribute. The raised hand is likely a gesture of recitation, or blessing. The feet are aligned with the base and are placed apart. This stance may have been chosen to convey the firmness and resolve of the person interacting with the deity.

Symbols and Ornamental Pattern

Symbols and repetitive patterns were traditional elements in the art and architecture of ancient South Arabia. Icons such as animal figures and heads (ibexes and oryxes; see pl. 40, 41, and 42) were arranged in series to frame a field of a central text on a stelae, or decorate the margins and edges of a building or a ritual object. Some of the earliest examples of such figurative series are in the temples of Kharībat Hamdān and as-Sawdā in the Jawf region (probably 8th century BC); where one finds fine incised geometrical and floral designs, as well as ibexes, ostriches, serpents, antelopes, and female figures—probably representing priestesses—in a shrinelike frame. While the animals symbolize the sacred hunt, the priestesses may be associated with festive rituals and fertility.

A central element on some stelae is the crescent moon lying supine with horns facing up and a small lunar or solar disk between the horns. Other icons are derivative of Near Eastern or Egyptian models; these include powerful creatures, such as winged bulls and sphinxes, tree of life motifs, and lion tamers. Patterns like those produced by niches, false windows and doors, as well as dentate friezes adorn not only the walls and pillars of buildings, but also the frames of stelae (see pl. 40 and 41 and their proposed recontructions in the catalog) and the sides of ritual objects, such as altars or incense burners (see pl. 50). These patterns may identify sacred spaces. Patterns of the Late Period, influenced by Greco-Roman traditions, display grape leaves, grapes, rosettes, and amphorae, all of which may be related to fertility.

Photographs

Images are listed sequentially by their plate numbers in the catalog.

Facing page: Plate 1

Above: Plate 3

Facing page: Plate 2

Plate 4

Plate 5

Plate 6

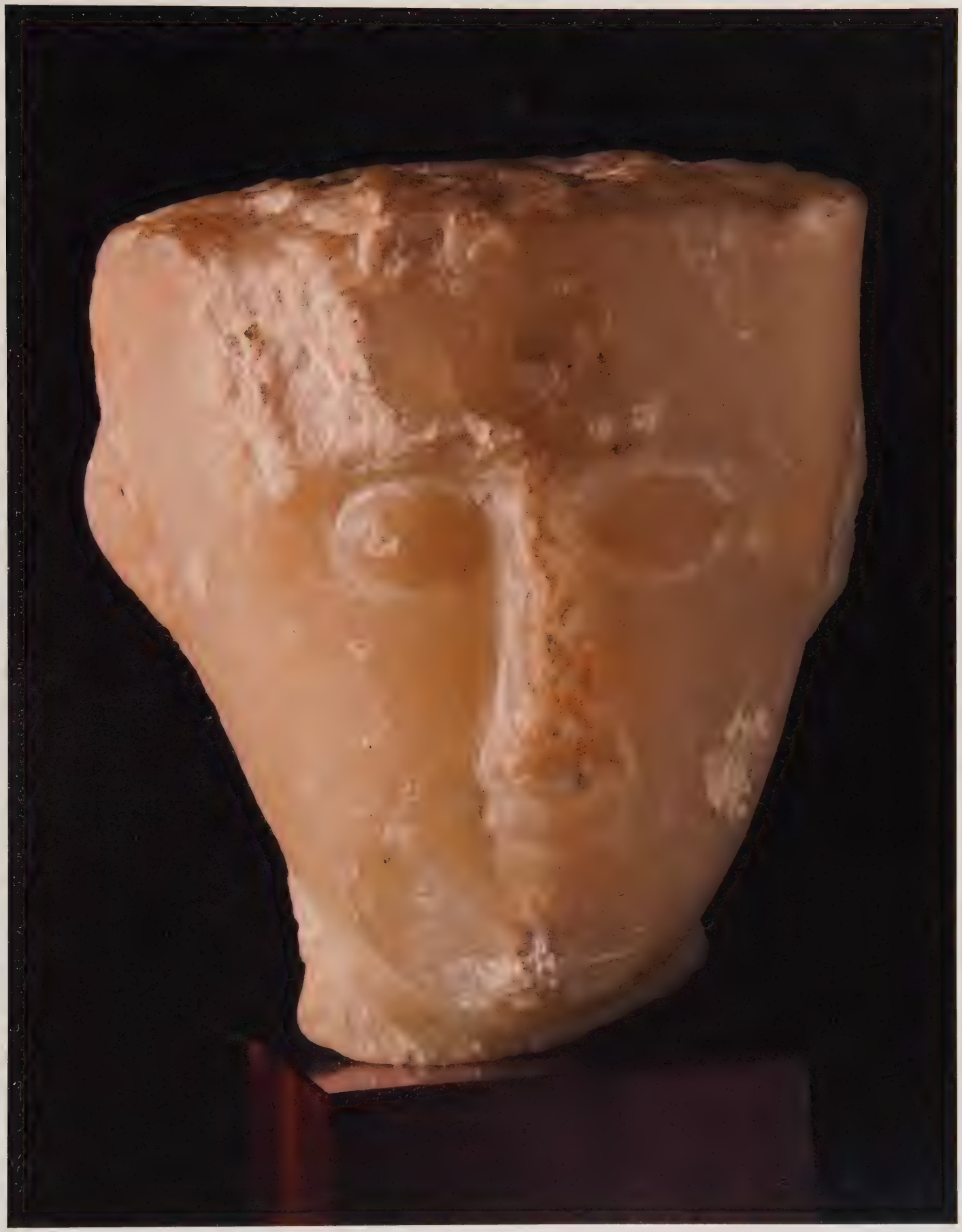


Plate 7

Above: Plate 8

Facing page: Plate 9

Plate 10

Plate 11

Plate 12 (two views)

Plate 13

Plate 14

Plate 15

Plate 16

Plate 17

Above: Plate 18

Facing page: Plate 19

Above: Plate 20 (detail)

Facing page: Plate 20

Plate 21

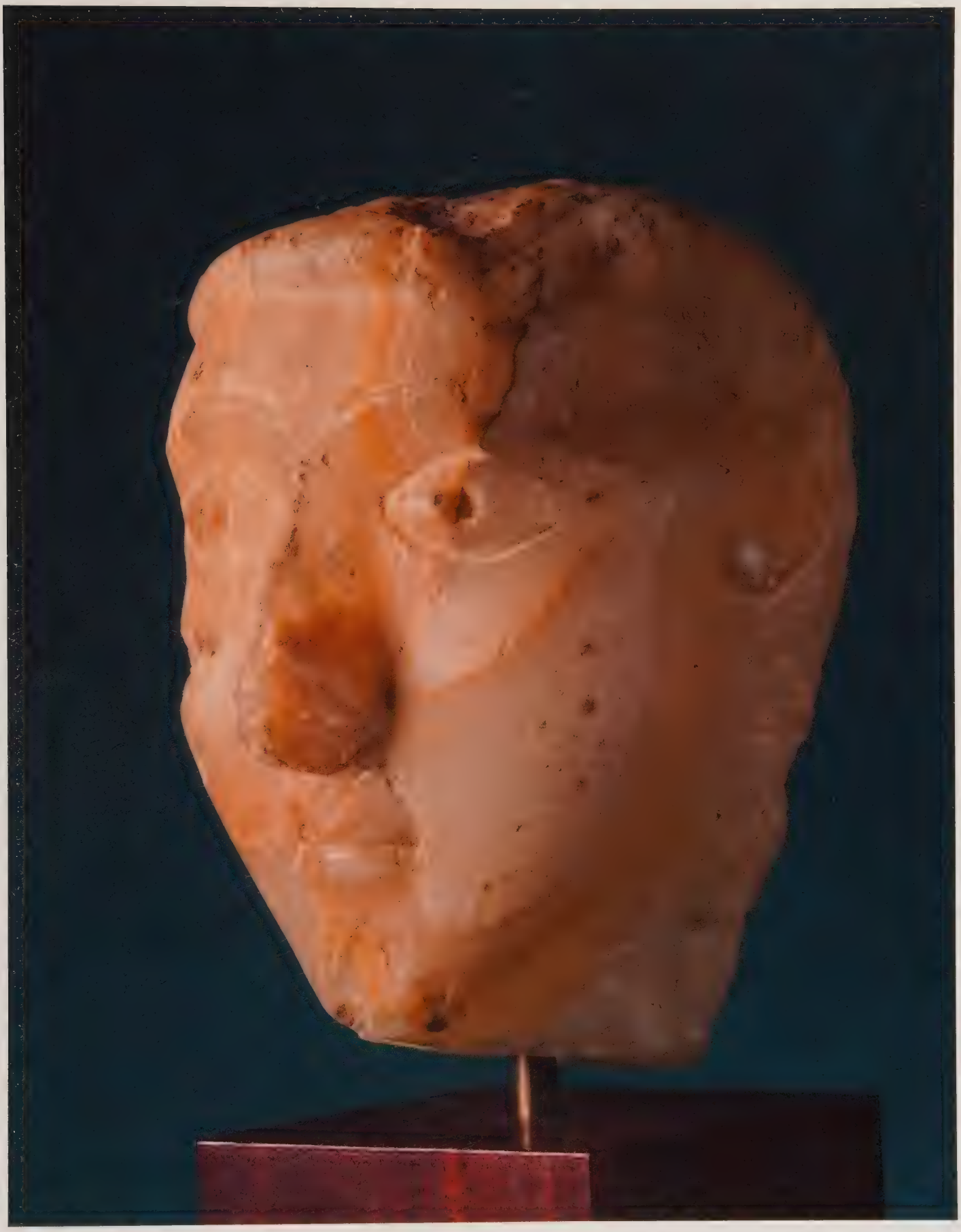


Plate 22

Plate 23

Plate 24

Plate 25

Above: Plate 26

Facing page: Plate 27

Above: Plate 28

Facing page: Plate 29

Following four pages: Plates 30 and 31

Plate 32 (two views)

Plate 33

Above: Plate 34

Facing page: Plate 35

Plate 36

Plate 37

Plate 38

Plate 39

Following two pages: Plate 40

Plate 41

Plate 42

Plate 42 (detail)

Plate 43

Plate 44

Plate 45

Plate 46

Plate 47

Above: Plate 48

Facing page: Plate 49

Plate 50

Plate 51

Plate 52

Plate 53

Plate 54

Plate 55a

Plate 55b

Plate 55c

Plate 55d

Plate 56

Plate 57

Plate 58

Nota Bene: Unless otherwise indicated reference to *right* or *left* in the descriptions of human and animal figures corresponds to the figures' right or left; in descriptions of inanimate objects including head-stelae, these references correspond to the viewer's right or left.

Plate 1 Head-Stela with Stylized Face in Raised Relief

6th–3rd century BC. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 15 cm, W. 13 cm, D. 6 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), Monday, 18 May 1970, 17, lot 64. Walters Art Museum, 21.36.

The face is executed in raised relief as part of a stela that is carved of evenly colored calcite–alabaster, which has only a few colored spots. A part of the viewer's left side of the stela is missing, and the surface of the face is somewhat scratched. The front of the stela is smooth and the face polished, while the sides are rough. The face is triangular in shape (ratio width to length: 1:1.3) with a narrow, low forehead, flat cheeks, and long chin (ratio forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1:2:1.6). The facial details are abstracted by using stylized, narrow raised fascias to indicate rims of eyes; pupils are in raised relief, while eyebrows are horizontally incised into the supra-orbital ridges. The nose is slim and straight and barely projects; no nostrils are indicated. A straight upper and a curved lower lip form a partially open mouth; a long moustache is deeply incised, as is a butterfly-shaped dimple on the chin. A beard that is made apparent by a flat recessed plane surrounding the lower face indicates that the deceased is male.

Parallels and Comparisons: Berlin, Museum of Islamic Art, I 16/68, see Hauptmann v. Gladiss (1979), 150, pl. 28,3; London, Gimpel Fils (1970), no. 13.

Plate 2 Head of a Woman with Triangular Face

1st century BC. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 15.5 cm, W. 12.5 cm, D. 11 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), probably Monday, 23 January 1967, 21, lot 87. Walters Art Museum, 21.21.

The head is sculpted from evenly colored, good-quality veined calcite-alabaster. The face is polished to the hairline. The top of the head is roughly flattened, as is the entire rear of the piece. A head like this usually was placed in a niche, and therefore only the frontal aspect needed to be well finished. The head has lost the inlay of its eyes and any painting it might have once had. Both eye sockets appear to have faint pupils. The nose and chin are chipped. The face is elongated and triangular (ratio width to length: 1:1.5), with a high forehead, sharply marked supra-orbital margins, flat cheeks, and a round, extended chin (ratio forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1:2:1.2). The handle-like stylized ears are small and protrude at the side of the head at the level of the eyebrows. The hair locks are behind and below the ears, and part of the hair on top possibly was formed from stucco. The sockets of the once-inlaid eyes are elliptical and have faint images of pupils at their bases; the thick-lined incised brows are nearly straight, and an extra line marks the lower edge of the supra-orbital margin areas. The nose is long and slim and barely widens at the tip, and the nostrils are not indicated. The very small mouth does not extend beyond the width of the nose; it has a straight fissure and thin, very raised lips. The principal facial features are those of sculptures found at Timna' (Ḥayd ibn 'Aqīl). The hairstyle of the sculpture is that of a woman, and the material and the quality of the work suggest that she is of high social status.

Parallels and Comparisons: Pl. 3 and 4 in present publication; Falls Church, American Foundation for the Study of Man, TC 1975; see Seipel (1998), 351, no. 342 = Cleveland (1965), 8, pl. 18; TC 1882; see Cleveland (1965), 8, pl. 16; TC 2259; see Cleveland (1965), 9, pl. 23; London, Sotheby's, Wednesday, 2 December 1970, 31, lot 97.

Plate 3 Head and Neck of a Woman with U-Shaped Face and Long Neck

1st century BC–1st century AD. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 15 cm, W. 8 cm, D. 5 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), Monday, 21 December 1964, 34, lot 140. Walters Art Museum, 21.31.

The head is made of an evenly toned calcite-alabaster with a reddish vertical vein that runs down the left side of the face and neck. The face and neck are polished, the ears and triangular hair sections are smooth, and the top, back, and bot-

tom of the piece are roughly flattened. A shallow 1 cm diagonal scratch is below the lateral edge of the right eye. The main characteristics of the head are similar to pl. 1 and 4 and other heads from Timna' (Ḥayd ibn 'Aqīl). This face is U-shaped (ratio width to length: 1:1.3), with a high forehead, elongated cheeks, and a short, round chin (ratio forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1.6:2.6:1). Two horizontally incised channels carved into the forehead above the eyes indicate the eyebrows. The wide-open, once-inlaid eyes are elliptical. The remains of fixative used for inlays have survived in the eye sockets. The outer corners of the eyes have short incised lateral extensions, which may indicate cosmetic eye paint. The long, slim nose barely broadens, and the nostrils are not indicated. The small mouth is straight, with the upper lip slightly separated from the fleshier lower lip. The stylized ears lie flat against the head and are above the level of the eyebrow. There is little space between the nose and mouth, and the hair is slightly shorter on the right. The serious facial expression is comparable to those of pl. 2 and 4, but the round forms of the face and the full lips convey a youthful impression.

Parallels and Comparisons: Pl. 2 and 4 in present publication; Falls Church, American Foundation for the Study of Man: TC 1975, see Cleveland (1965), 8, pl. 18 = Seipel (1998), 351, no. 342; TC 1882, see Cleveland (1965), 8, pl. 16; and TC 2259, see Cleveland (1965), 9, pl. 23; London, The British Museum, WA 130888, see Doe (1971), pl. 18 (left head) = Seipel (1998), 367–68, no. 406; Liverpool, Liverpool Museum, 1966.192, see Kitchen (1994), 171–73, no. 3; London, Sotheby's, Monday, 4 May 1970, 12, lot. 33.

Plate 4 Head of a Woman with Oval Face and Long Neck

1st century BC–1st century AD. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 22 cm, W. 12 cm, D. 8.5 cm. Acquired by Carolyn Foster from Royal-Athena Galleries (New York), 20 November 1987; previously it was in an American Private Collection (records of Royal-Athena Galleries). Walters Art Museum, 21.24.

The head is of pale beige calcite-alabaster with dark red spots and veins. Only the face and neck are polished; other parts are rough. The top and back are flattened. The outer edges of the ears and parts of the hair are missing; there are also several long scratches that cross the face and neck. Remains of stucco used in the eye sockets to affix inlays have survived. The sculpture has similarities to pl. 2 and 3, and close parallels to other female heads excavated at Timna' (Ḥayd ibn 'Aqīl) with the same hair style, highly placed ears, long slim nose, and small, straight mouth that is no wider than the tip of the nose. The lips are pressed tightly together and give the face a serious expression. The face is oval (ratio width to length: 1:1.4), the forehead high, the supra-orbital ridges pronounced, and the chin short (ratio forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1.8:2.2:1). The curved brows are incised; the eye sockets are elliptical; the nose is triangular without nostrils; and the chin is pointed. The extremely long and slim neck is also typical for images of this type and may have been a convention that indicated beauty.

Parallels and Comparisons: Pl. 2 and 3 in present publication; Falls Church, American Foundation for the Study of Man, TC 1882, see Cleveland (1965), 8, pl. 16; London, Gimpel Fils (1970), no. 5; Berlin, Museum of Islamic Art, I 14/68, see Hauptmann v. Gladiss (1979), 149, pl. 28,1; London, Christie's, 16 December 1982, 19, lot 104; Munich, State Museum of Ethnology, 93-317037 (on loan by the Ernst von Siemens-Kunst-Stiftung), see Seipel (1998), 292–93, no. 156; New York, Christie's, Thursday, 7 December 2006, 63, lot 61; Detroit, Detroit Institute of Arts, 1992.201, see http://www.dia.org/collections/ancient/sarabian sculpture/1992.2108.

Plate 5 Fragment of a Stela with Small U-Shaped Human Face

1st century BC–1st century AD. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 11.1 cm, W. 10.4 cm, D. 5.4 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London) between 1963 and 1971. Walters Art Museum, 21.42.

The face is of good-quality unveined calcite-alabaster and is an integral part of a stela. The slab is mostly lost except for the back of the head and part of each side of the face. The once-inlaid eyes are missing, and there is slight pitting above the left eye. The face is polished, and the top and back are flattened and smoothed. The U-shaped face (ratio width to length:

1:1.4) has a low forehead, full cheeks, and a round chin (ratio forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1:1.7:1.1). The edges of the eye sockets are partially damaged; one sees tool marks here suggesting that someone pried out inset eyes; the eyes have lateral extensions. The supra-orbital ridges coalesce to form a long, slim nose with drilled nostrils. A single, slightly curved line forms the mouth, its width barely extending beyond the breadth of the nose; the lips are not accentuated. Only the outlines of the ears are incised (level with the forehead).

Parallels and Comparisons: London, The British Museum, ANE 2002-1-14,2, see Simpson (2002), 195, no. 271; New York, Christie's, Thursday, 11 December 2003, 88, lot 126; New York, Sotheby's, Thursday, 9 December 2004, 158 and 168, lot 398.

Plate 6 Head of a Man with Elongated Face and Serious Expression

1st century BC–1st century AD. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 9 cm, W. 6 cm, D. 5.4 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), Monday, 21 December 1970, 20, lot 83. Walters Art Museum, 21.33.

The head is made of white, moderately translucent calcite-alabaster with yellow veins that are most visible on the sides of the face. The face and top are polished, and the back is flattened but rough. The face is elongated and U-shaped (ratio width to length: 1:1.35), and it has a high forehead and supra-orbital arches that join to form a prominent triangular nose with a thin, flat bridge and drilled nostrils (ratio forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1:1.4:1). The large, protruding, bulbous eyes are almost round and are set off from the face by incised lines (their features have parallels in works created in Sabaean workshops; see pl. 7). They lack interior detail and may originally have been painted. Naso-labial furrows are to the sides of the pointed chin. The area between naso-labial furrows is raised, and a horizontal straight slit across this forms the mouth, the length of which is shorter than the breadth of the nose. The hair is a uniform mass, set off from the forehead by an incised band.

Parallels and Comparisons: London, The British Museum, ANE 2002-1-14,3, see Simpson (2002), 196, no. 272; Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, YM 1097; and Mārib Depot (number unknown), see Hauptmann v. Gladiss (1979), 166–67, pl. 35,7–8; Ar-Riyaḍ, Private Collection, see Antonini (1998), 266, fig. 6.

Plate 7 Head of a Smiling Person with Triangular Face

2nd–1st century BC. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 12.5 cm, W. 12 cm, D. 8 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London) between 1963 and 1971. Walters Art Museum, 21.28.

The head is made of evenly colored, unveined calcite-alabaster. The surface is pockmarked, especially on the left cheek, the right and center forehead, and the chin where a 2 cm chip is missing and on both sides of the nose. Some of the damage, especially to the nose, may have been the result of acts of intentional destruction. The face and neck are polished, the top of the head is roughly flattened, and an approximately 1 cm slab has been cut from behind the neck.

The triangular face (ratio width to length: 1:1.1; forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1:1.7:1.05) has a broad forehead, somewhat full cheeks, and a round chin, as well as plastically modeled eyes, ears, nose, and supra-orbital arches. The large round-oval eyes dominate the facial features, and the slightly protruding eyes have incised contours. The length of the slim nose is moderate by South Arabian standards, and the slightly upturned, full-lipped mouth is small. There are no indicators to suggest gender, but in the absence of hair locks the subject is most likely male. The large eyes and features suggest youth. The bulbous eyes, which may have once been painted, and the smile suggest that the work is most likely of Sabaean origin or from the Jawf region.

Parallels and Comparisons: Rathjens (1955), 91–94, photos 326–29; Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, YM 10565, 1097; and a piece from the Mārib Depot, see Hauptmann v. Gladiss (1979), 166–67, pl. 35,6–8; Mārib, Mārib Museum, AW 97 A 1281, see Seipel (1998), 344, no. 316.

Plate 8 U-Shaped Juvenile Face

1st century BC–1st century AD. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 9.4 cm, W. 6.5 cm, D. 5 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), Monday, 21 December 1970, 20, lot 83. Walters Art Museum, 21.35.

The high-quality white calcite-alabaster head has a single brown vein, which runs across the right temple. The condition of the face is excellent. There are a few tool marks on the forehead that have not been removed by polishing, and a very small chip is missing from the tip of the nose. The face is highly polished, and the top and back of the head are flattened but rough. The face is U-shaped (ratio width to length: 1:1.6) with a high forehead, long, flat cheeks, and a long, round chin (ratio forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1:1.8:1.1). The supra-orbital ridges are not incised. They join the root of a long, slim nose, with incised depressions for the nostrils. The eyes protrude and are elliptical, and the surfaces are flattened. Like pl. 6, naso-labial furrows extend down from the nose, and the area has been left raised to form the borders of a small, protruding chin. A small, straight mouth with thin protruding lips has been modeled between the nose and the tip of the chin. The face has a youthful but serious expression. There are no indicators to suggest the gender of the subject. The facial features, however, are similar to those of pl. 6, and it is likely that the piece was carved in a Sabaean workshop.

Parallels and Comparisons: Pl. 6; Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, YM 1097; and a piece in the Mārib Depot, see Hauptmann v. Gladiss (1979), 166–67, pl. 35,7–8.

Plate 9 Head-Stela of a Man with Circular Beard

5th–2nd century BC. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 15.5 cm, W. 12.6 cm, D. 7.5 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London) between 1963 and 1971. Walters Art Museum, 21.30.

The male head is an integral part of a rectangular panel, the whole presumably being that of a funeral stela. It is carved of good-quality calcite-alabaster with a single major brown vein that runs horizontally across the lower part of the face and through the mouth. The overall condition is excellent, with only a few chips missing from the beard and the sides of the plaque.

The head protrudes from the rectangular stela, which has curved upper corners. There are no inscriptions, although beside and below the face there is empty space that could have been used for this purpose. The man being represented has short hair and a circular beard, which frames his cheeks and chin; the surface of the hair is somewhat rough, contrasting with the high polish of the face and the surface of the stela. The face is U-shaped (ratio width to length: 1:1.1; ratio forehead to nose to chin section: 1:1.8:1), has finely modeled supra-orbital ridges without incisions to indicate eyebrows, large almond-shaped eyes with accentuated rims, and a triangular nose with wide wings and carved nostrils. The thin-lipped mouth has drooping corners and a deeply incised oral fissure; the chin is small and somewhat prominent; slight naso-labial depressions run from the wings of the nose to the corners of the mouth and flank the somewhat protruding chin. Large, handle-like ears with modeled inner structures flank the eyes and forehead. The right ear has traces of a stucco-like substance. This idealized portrait is of a male adult. The quality of the stone and the excellent craftsmanship suggest that the person may have been of high status. The stela was probably inserted into a base and not a niche to exhibit it in a way that the polished back and smoothed sides could be seen from all directions. A close parallel to this piece (see below: London, Christie's) was found in Ḥayd ibn 'Aqīl, the necropolis of Timna', from where this stela probably comes.

Parallels and Comparisons: Berlin, Museum of Islamic Art, I 2704, see Mordtmann (1893), 47, no. 2704, pl. VII; Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, see Radt (1973), 14, no. 62, pl. 23, upper row, far right; Robin (1997), 154; London, Christie's, Tuesday, 13 May 2003, 24, lot 31 = London, Christie's, Tuesday, 12 July 1960, lot 111.

Plate 10 Head and Neck of a Man with Oval Face and Moustache

1st century BC–1st century AD. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 12.5 cm, W. 9 cm, D. 9 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London) between 1963 and 1971. Walters Art Museum, 21.32.

The head is made of fair-quality calcite-alabaster that has uniform color, poor transparency, and light-brown veins on the neck and the right side of the forehead. The face is highly polished in contrast to the neck and ears, which are only smooth. The top of the head and back are roughly finished as if the piece was to be placed in a niche. The hairline is sharply demarked. The sides and back of the neck are enclosed in ancient plaster, which was used undoubtedly to secure the head in a niche or base. The face is oval (ratio width to length: 1:1.25), the forehead broad, the bridge of the nose slightly arched, and the chin pointed (ratio forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1.5:1.6:1). The eyebrows are not incised; the supra-orbital ridges are androgenoid and coalesce into the root of the nose, which does not have drilled nostrils. The bulbous, protuberant eyes are almond-shaped; the eyelids are rimmed and have lateral extensions. The right ear is smaller than the left. The lips are suggested by slightly raised surfaces, and the mouth appears lopsided and slightly open. The prominent supra-orbital ridges, together with the absence of hair locks in the presence of plastically modeled ears, suggest that the subject is a male. The protuberant eyes, moderate-sized nose, and relatively wide mouth are compatible with a Sabaean origin.

Parallels and Comparisons: Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, YM 10565, 1097; and Mārib Depot (number unknown), Hauptmann v. Gladiss (1979), 167, pl. 35, 6–8; London, Gimpel Fils (1970), no. 17.

Plate 11 Head and Neck of a Man with Long-Oval Face

6th–5th century BC. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 18.5 cm, W. 14 cm, D. 8 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), probably Monday, 23 January 1967, 20, lot 86. Walters Art Museum, 21.44.

The head is sculpted in uniformly colored calcite-alabaster without veins and is of poor transparency. There are numerous pockmarks. The piece presumably was intended to be placed in a niche: the face is polished, the neck, ears, and sides are somewhat smooth, and the top and back are roughly flattened. The features are not well modeled. The long oval face (ratio width to length: 1:1.4) has a low forehead and a short nose relative to elongated cheeks and to a long, prominent chin (ratio forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1:1.2:1.4). The supra-orbital margins are barely implied, and the eyes are executed as raised elliptical projections. The left eye is slightly larger than the right. A depression in the lower part of the face suggests the mouth, and irregular projections from the sides of the head indicate the ears. The barely modeled features and the proportions of the face are characteristic of early representations from Mārib.

Publications: Fakhry (1951), pl. XLIII, lower right (caption of the pl. "collection of alabaster heads found in the store of the guest house at Mārib").

Plate 12 Statue of a Seated Woman

1st century BC–1st century AD. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 26.5 cm, W. 11.8 cm, D. 12.8 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London) between 1963 and 1971. Walters Art Museum, 21.61.

The statue is of very fine, evenly colored calcite-alabaster. The head and hands of the statue are broken off, as well as the top of the right shoulder, and the left posterior corner of the base and the top edges of the seat are chipped. The entire surface of the figure is highly polished, indicating that the figure was installed to be seen from all sides. The full-figured individual is seated on a stool, with arms bent at the elbow and stretched forward. The breasts and the long garment, which covers the whole body except her toes, clearly identify the subject as a woman. This conclusion is further supported by the fact that women are more often portrayed seated than men. The structures of the body are smoothly formed, and the back muscles and the depressions of the spinal column are readily recognizable. The shape of the stool on which she sits is unusual. It has a solid back and slender, bi-concave side panels. The seat could have developed from a folding chair (compare pl. 28). The integrated base is inscribed with the name of the female owner:

Nbᶜt / Ygr

Both the given name and the clan names are authentic Qatabānean names (Harding [1971], 579, 660).

Publications: Antonini (2001), 56, pl. 19; CIAS I (1977), 343-344; CIAS 734/s 4/47.12; CSAI, I, 289.

Parallels and Comparisons: Falls Church, American Foundation for the Study of Man, TC 1518, see Seipel (1998), 353, no. 347. For a statue with comparable seat see Aden, The National Museum, AM 759, see CIAS (1977), 339–42 = CSAI I, 288.

Plate 13 Stela with Representation of a Standing Woman

5th–1st century BC. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 31.5 cm, W. 17.5 cm, D. 5.5 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), Monday, 19 October 1970, 19, lot 97. Walters Art Museum, 21.50.

This stela, made of evenly colored calcite-alabaster, is up to now without parallel. It is of a trapezoidal slab with irregular edges and a female figure in high relief on its front. All sides of the stela are polished, suggesting that it was inserted into a base and displayed where all sides could be seen. The base would have had an inscription identifying the person depicted. The woman is portrayed in frontal view; her feet are pointing to her right, with both the tops and the sides visible. Although she appears to be nude, there is a suggestion of short sleeves on the arms but no other evidence of clothing. She wears bracelets and anklets, and the bulge between the head and the shoulders may be a necklace. The hair is combed back on the head and is indicated by cross-hatching; two long locks behind the large ears fall to the shoulders. The face is disproportionately large, with round eyes, straight supra-orbital ridges, and a long, thin nose that does not widen appreciably. The mouth is small, the oral fissure straight and lopsided, and the naso-labial folds extend to the chin. The hands on the hips are unusual. However, the combining of views of different parts of the body from different vantage points is a part of the South Arabian artistic tradition (e.g., Calvet/Robin [1997], 108 and 110; Simpson [2002], 125; Seipel [1998], 340–41). The figure lacks natural proportions. The head is too large for the body and the arms and legs are too short for the trunk. Therefore, the possibility exists that this figure could be of an achondroplastic dwarf.

Parallels and Comparisons: Paris, Louvre, AO 1029 and AO 20893, see Calvet/Robin (1997), 108 and 110; Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, YM 19 and 342, see Seipel (1998), 340–41, nos. 294–95; Ṣana'ā', Military Museum, 4826, see Seipel (1998), 336 and 338, no. 291; London, The British Museum, ANE 2002-1-14,1, see Simpson (2002), 125, no. 142.

Plate 14 Head of a Woman with Rectangular Face

3rd–1st century BC. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 19 cm; W. 14 cm, D. 10.5 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), Monday, 21 December 1970, 20, lot 83. Walters Art Museum, 21.23.

The head is of unevenly colored calcite-alabaster. The rectangular face and neck are smooth but not polished, and the top and back are roughly flattened. The nose and left forehead and cheek have numerous small gouges, and the tip of the nose is missing. The type, style, and technique of this sculpture are comparable to another head (pl. 15), and both pieces possibly were produced in the same Sabaean workshop. Nevertheless, there are some notable differences: the proportions differ slightly (ratio of width to length: 1:1.3; of forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1:3:2), and the face and neck of this head seem to be less heavy. Additionally, the eyes are somewhat rounder; the lower lip is fleshier than the upper lip; and the small chin is pointed. The neck has incised rings around it—the so-called rings of Venus—which may be indicators of female beauty.

Parallels and Comparisons: Pl. 15 in this publication; Rathjens (1955), 91–94, photos 326–65; London, Gimpel Fils (1970), no. 16; Berlin, Museum of Ancient Near Eastern Art, VA 2703, see Hauptmann v. Gladiss (1979), 166, pl. 34,4; Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, YM 10565, 1097, see Hauptmann v. Gladiss (1979), 167, pl. 35, 7–8.

Plate 15 Head of a Man with Rectangular Face

3rd–1st century BC. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 17.8 cm, W. 13 cm, D. 10 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), Monday, 21 December 1970, 20, lot 83. Walters Art Museum, 21.22.

This sculpture of the head and neck of a man is made of evenly colored calcite-alabaster. The front is smooth and finished, while the top and back are roughly flattened. The tip of the nose is missing. The rectangular face (ratio width to length: 1:1.4) has a low forehead, flat cheeks, and a round, receding chin (ratio forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1:2.6:1.6). The nose and mouth are pronounced; the ears are missing; and the eyes are large and irregular with incised contours. Originally the eyes were probably painted. The supra-orbital ridges are barely modeled and are without incised eyebrows. The nose has hollowed-out nostrils, and the mouth is straight with slightly protruding lips. There is no indication of the figure's gender or age; however, the heavy face and neck suggest a male adult. Comparable pieces with similar features have been found inserted in stelae from Mārib.

Parallels and Comparisons: Pl. 14 in this publication; Rathjens (1955), 91–94, ills. 326–65 and 241, ills. 357–58; Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, YM 10565, 1097, and a piece in the Mārib Depot, see Hauptmann v. Gladiss (1979), 166–67, pl. 35,6–8; Paris, Louvre, AO 4695, see Calvet/Robin (1997), 125, no. 45; Vienna, Museum of Art History, Egyptian-Oriental Collection, Sem 119, see http://www.khm.at/homeE3.html/staticE/page2190.html; Detroit, the Detroit Institute of Arts, Gift of Tim G. and Leah D. Adams, 2002.208, see http://www.dia.org/the_collection/overview/viewobject.asp?objectid=94114.

Plate 16 Face of a Man with Stubble Beard

3rd–1st century BC. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 16 cm, W. 12 cm, D. 9 cm. This object was a gift made by the Amir to Dr. Foster in Mārib, and authorized by the Imam in 1962. Walters Art Museum, 21.25.

The face is of calcite-alabaster of relatively poor transparency; it has orange and dark spots and a few vertical veins. The piece was given to Dr. Foster in two pieces and he had them joined. The join can be seen going through the left eye. The top of the head, most of the hairline, both temples, and parts of the sides and bottom of the piece are missing. The features of the oval face are well proportioned (ratio of width to length: 1:1.2; of forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1:2.1:1.5). The horizontal supra-orbital ridges merge into a long, prominent nose that widens slightly and has shallow triangular nostrils. The mouth is slightly open and has a shorter upper lip and a fleshier lower lip. The large, almond-shaped eyes are incised, and the stubble of a beard is indicated by drilling in three rows in the sideburn and chin areas, with near equal distances between each drill point. The face is smooth but not polished, and the back of the head is rough. The features and craftsmanship indicate that this is an idealized portrait.

Parallels and Comparisons: Ar-Riyaḍ (Saudi Arabia), Private Collection, see Antonini (1998), 265, no. 6; Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, YM 10565, 1097, see Hauptmann v. Gladiss (1979), 167, pl. 35, 7–8.

Plate 17 Head of a Man with Circular Beard

6th–5th century BC. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 19.5 cm, W. 13 cm, D. 10 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), probably Monday, 23 January 1967, 20, lot 86. Walters Art Museum, 21.45.

The head is of a reddish-beige colored calcite-alabaster. There is a 2-cm depression in the right forehead and numerous small white marks, especially on both eyes, the beard, and right cheek that may be secondary to contusions. The U-shaped face (ratio width to length: 1:1.4), with long cheeks and round chin, has a long, slim nose with drilled nostrils (ratio forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1.1:1.3:1). The horizontally aligned supra-orbital ridges merge into the bridge of the nose. The small, protruding mouth has a straight oral fissure and slightly drooping corners. The eyes are not demarked. A beard circles the chin and cheeks. Most likely from Mārib.

Parallels and Comparisons: Radt (1973), 14, pl. 23, no. 61, lower right; Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, YM 1967, see Hauptmann v. Gladiss (1979), 166–67, pl. 35,3.

Plate 18 Small Stela with Human Head

5th–3rd century BC. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 13 cm, W. 9.5 cm, D. 7.5 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), Monday, 1 February 1971, 20, lot 81. Walters Art Museum, 21.47.

The piece is carved from beige calcite-alabaster. The right ear and the right side of the stela are dark brown. The face and the front surface of the stela are polished and smooth, and the top, sides, and back are roughly flattened. The void on the stela below the neck suggests that it was intended to be inserted into a niche or base. The face is oval (ratio width to length: 1:1.5) and has a long, triangular nose, which broadens and has slightly indented nostrils. The forehead and nose are well proportioned, but the mouth and chin are foreshortened (ratio forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1.3:1.8:1). The supraorbital ridges and nose are well modeled, while the eyes are not indicated and were probably originally painted. The mouth is straight; the lips protrude slightly (the upper lip is fleshier than the lower); and the width of the mouth exceeds that of the nose. The long cheeks and the short chin are well rounded, and the ears, which are plastically worked, stand out from the head. The surface of the slab is plain, and the outside frame of the niche of the stela likely may have been inscribed.

Parallels and Comparisons: Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, YM 1967, see Hauptmann v. Gladiss (1979), 166–67, pl. 35,3; London, The British Museum, ANE 2002-1-14,3, see Simpson (2002), 196, no. 272.

Plate 19 Head of a Woman with Long Neck on a Base

1st century AD. Calcite-Alabaster and Limestone; H. 24 cm, W. 11 cm, D. 7 cm. From Ḥayd ibn 'Aqīl; acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London) between 1963 and 1971. Walters Art Museum, 21.54.

This head has a long neck that is inserted into a hollow in a base. It is carved from an evenly colored, good-quality calcite-alabaster with veins and is mounted in a cube-shaped base made of fine-grain limestone. It is well preserved except for a partial loss of the left side of the nose, a chipped upper lateral aspect of the left eye, small pockmarks on the right cheek, and minor losses of the edges of the pedestal. The front and sides of the head are polished; the back of the neck is smooth; and the hair, top, and back are rough. The top, front, and foreparts of the sides of the base are smooth, and the back and recessed parts of the sides are rough.

The elongated head joins a long neck, of uniform diameter. The head has a long, oval face (ratio width to length: 1:1.6) that is well proportioned (ratio forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1:1:1), with flat cheeks and a full, round chin. The face is dominated by prominent eyes with deeply incised outlines, accentuated lids, and large pupils that are drilled and originally inlaid. The width of the straight mouth extends the width of the nasal wings; the lower lip appears fleshier than the upper; and both corners of the mouth appear to have been drilled slightly. The ears lie flat, close to the head. Three incised lines, the so-called rings of Venus, cross the neck.

The front of the base has two lines of inscription. The letters are tall and narrow and are typical of the first or second century AD:

Hlqb
Dt / Wqš

The given name in the upper line is related to the known name *Lqb* and identifies the portrait as that of a woman (Harding [1971], 518); the second name, is the clan name, which occurs not only in Qatabānean but also in North Arabian dialects.

Published: Antonini (2001), 151, pl. 96; CIAS I (1977), 569–171 (CIAS T 67/s 4/47.12, called "Foster 14"); CSAI I, 367.

Parallels and Comparisons: Falls Church, American Foundation for the Study of Man, TC 914, see Cleveland (1965), 6, pl. 6; and TC 2053; see Seipel (1998), 351–52, no. 344; London, Christie's, Wednesday, 8 December 1993, 128, lot 310.

Plate 20 Figure of a Female Ritualist

2nd century BC–1st century AD. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 34 cm, W. 12 cm, D. 11 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London) between 1963 and 1971. Walters Art Museum, 21.49.

The statuette is carved from dark, banded calcite-alabaster. The hands of the figure are missing, and the head, which has been reattached, possibly belonged to a different but similar

statue. The small, protruding breasts and the long, sheath-like costume, which envelops the whole body except the toes, indicate that the subject is a woman. She is standing on a low integral plinth that was probably inserted in a second higher one and that carried an inscription with her name. Her short arms are bent and were originally stretched forward, most likely in a gesture of welcome or prayer.

The head is in proportion to the body. The face is ovoid (ratio width to length: 1:1.5), the forehead high, the cheeks full, and the short chin round (ratio forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1:1:1). The semicircular eyebrows are cut into the protruding supra-orbital ridges, which coalesce with the bridge of the nose. The outlines of the elliptical eyes are incised and the originally inlaid pupils drilled. The nose is thin and contrasts with the fleshy, protruding lips. The adjacent ears are C-shaped and have modeled inner structures. The top of the head is roughly flattened to fit in a niche. The repertoire of statuettes within the corpus of South Arabian sculpture is relatively small, and most represent men. There are few images of standing women with arms stretched forward, probably in a votary gesture. (see Hauptmann v. Gladdis [1979], pls. 33 and 35).

Parallels and Comparisons: London, Christie's, Thursday, 16 December 1982, 21–22, lots 110 and 112; Paris, Collection Madame Antonin Besse, see Seipel (1998), 293–94, no. 158; Falls Church, American Foundation for the Study of Man, TC 1518, see Seipel (1998), 353, no. 347 = Cleveland (1965), 13, pls. 28–29.

Plate 21 Head and Neck of a Person with Very Round Face

3rd–1st century BC. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 13.8 cm, W. 10.5 cm, D. 7.5 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), Monday, 1 February 1971, 20, lot 81. Walters Art Museum, 21.26.

The head is carved from evenly colored, translucent calcite-alabaster with several reddish and brownish veins. The face and neck are polished; the top is flattened and smooth; the sides are rough and have no ears; and a part of the lower edge of the neck is missing. The face is round (ratio width to length: 1:1) and has a high forehead, long nose, short mouth, and rounded chin (ratio forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1.1:1.6:1). The upper borders of the eyebrows are semicircular-shaped incisions. The rhombic-elliptical eyes are rimmed; their pupils are drilled; and likely they were originally inlaid or filled with pigment. The triangular nose has drilled nostrils and barely widens at its wings. The small mouth, with thin, protruding lips, does not extend the width of the nose and is closed and straight. The face has several irregularities: the eyes differ slightly in that one pupil is set lower than the other; the supra-orbital ridge is higher on the left; and the right brow is shorter than the left. While the large eyes and the round shape of the face with its full cheeks convey a youthful impression, there are no indicators of the gender of the person portrayed. No direct parallels exist for the circle-like face; however, the facial features suggest that it is Qatabānean.

Parallels and Comparisons: London, Gimpel Fils (1970), no. 26 = Hauptmann v. Gladiss (1979), 162–63, pl. 32,2; Paris, Louvre, AO 4697, see Calvet/Robin (1997), 125, no. 47; London, The British Museum, ME 102461, see Simpson (2002), 192, no. 264.

Plate 22 Head of a Man with Full Cheeks

3rd–1st century BC. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 13 cm, W. 10 cm, D. 9.5 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), Monday, 18 May 1970, 17, lot 64. Walters Art Museum, 21.27.

The head was sculpted from irregularly banded brown and tan calcite-alabaster. The tip of the nose is missing, and the right cheek and the left temple, eye, and ear are damaged. The face and neck are smooth and polished; the top of the head and ears are roughly formed; and the back is flattened. The face is somewhat unusual in that the cheeks are hyper-extended and the chin is pointed (ratio width to length: 1:1.2). The forehead is short and has a thick incised hairline (ratio forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1:1.6:1.1). The curvilinear brows cut into the supra-orbital ridges, which coalesce into a strong, protruding nose. The elliptical eyes are incised and have point-like drilled pupils that once were inlaid. The small mouth is straight, deeply incised, and wider than the wings of the nose, and has

fleshy lips. The distended cheeks suggest a corpulent man. While the frontal view conveys a youthful impression, the profile looks adult. The sculpture most comparable to this head was excavated in Timna'.

Parallels and Comparisons: Rathjens (1955), 91–94, photos 330–37; Falls Church, American Foundation for the Study of Man, TC 1588, see Cleveland (1965), 7, pls. 13–14 = Seipel (1998), 351–52, no. 343; Berlin, Museum of Near Eastern Art, VA 2703, see Hauptmann v. Gladiss (1979), 166, pl. 33,4; London, Gimpel Fils (1970), no. 44; London, Sotheby's, Monday, 3 December 1973, 18, lot 25.

Plate 23 Fragment of a Stela with U-Shaped Face

3rd–1st century BC. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 5.2 cm, W. 5.5 cm, D. 4.5 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London) between 1963 and 1971. Walters Art Museum, 21.59.

The stela is carved from a piece of banded calcite-alabaster. The back of the head appears to have been a slab, most of which is now lost except for a small part beside the right side. The original piece may well have been a stela. The nose, mouth, and left cheek are badly damaged. The front and parts of the sides are polished, while the top and back remain rough. The face is U-shaped (ratio width to length: 1:1) and has a short forehead, flat cheeks, long nose, and a small round chin (ratio forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1:1.6:1.2). The eyebrows are incised as curvilinear channels above the supra-orbital arches, which blend into the damaged nose. The eyes are plastically rimmed, and the pupils are drilled. The mouth is indicated by a horizontal incision, which extends slightly beyond the width of the nasal wings. Only the right ear has survived, but it is barely recognizable. A part of the neck has been preserved.

Parallels and Comparisons: Aden, The National Museum, AM 749, see Doe (1971), pl. 20 = CSAI I, 215; Stuttgart, Linden Museum, A31482, see Müller (1973), 50–53 = CSAI I, 705; London, Christie's, Monday, 3 December 1973, 20, no. 26; Private Collection, see Bron (1985), 97–98, pl. 9 = CSAI I, 281.

Plate 24 Fragment of a Stela with Human Face

3rd–1st century BC. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 5.5 cm, W. 5 cm, D. 2.5 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's between 1963 and 1971. Walters Art Museum, 21.64.

The stela is made of evenly colored calcite-alabaster, and the head is well preserved with the loss of some hair on the left side. The face is on a slab, most of which is missing except for small sections above and on the left side of the face. It is U-shaped (ratio width to length: 1:1.1) and dominated by large eyes and a long nose, flat cheeks, and a projecting short chin (ratio forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1.1:1.8:1). The eyes are almond-shaped and have drilled pupils, and short, thin, incised lines extend the inner and outer corners of the eyes; the inner extension of the right eye penetrates into the nose. The curved brows are incised into the supra-orbital ridges, which blend into the triangularly shaped nose. The mouth is as wide as the wings of the nose, and the lips are divided by a wide oral fissure that conveys the impression of an open mouth. The raised surface above the forehead represents the hair. The physiognomic features share much in common with several other heads in this collection (see pl. 22, 23, 25, 26).

Parallels and Comparisons: London, The British Museum, ANE 102461, see Simpson (2002), 192, no. 264; Berlin, Museum of Islamic Art, I 16/68, see Hauptmann v. Gladiss (1979), 150, pl. 28, 4.

Plate 25 Head of a Man with Moustache and Grumpy Face

2nd–1st century BC. Calcite-Alabaster (banded variety); H. 9.1 cm, W. 10 cm, D. 6 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), Monday, 21 December 1970, 20, lot 83. Walters Art Museum, 21.34.

The face is made of slightly banded calcite-alabaster and is cursorily executed. Though the face and sides of the head are smooth, the top is crudely flattened, and the back is rough and partly covered with the original plaster used to attach the object to a niche. The U-shaped face (ratio width to length: 1:1.2) is barely modeled, with details rendered primarily by incision. The forehead is low; the cheeks are full; and the chin is prominent and round (ratio forehead to nose to mouth/chin

section: 1:2.6:3.8). The eyebrows are incised above the supra-orbital ridges, which coalesce into the bridge of a short, thin nose with drilled nostrils. The eyes are crudely indicated by incisions, and the pupils are drilled, with the left eye larger and slightly lower set than the right. A sulcus in the shape of a Cupid's bow, with ends pointing down, indicates a mouth. A horizontal groove under the nose suggests a moustache. The handle-like ears have carved semicircles. The mouth, with drooping corners gives the figure a serious expression.

Parallels and Comparisons: Falls Church, American Foundation for the Study of Man, TC 539, see Cleveland (1965), 5, pl. 1; Berlin, Museum of Islamic Art, I 29/75, see Hauptmann v. Gladiss (1979), 166–67, pl. 38,4.

Plate 26 Stela with Bust of a Woman

4th century BC–1st century AD. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 16 cm, W. 13.4 cm, D. 7 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), Monday, 18 May 1970, 18, lot 69. Walters Art Museum, 21.43.

The stela is carved from an evenly toned block of calcite-alabaster. Presumably it was later cut from a larger composition that may have represented a standing individual. In its present state only the upper part of the body is preserved; the left corner of the upper edge is missing, as are a number of small chips from the face, breast, arms, and hands. The stela is sculpted in raised relief; the front is polished; and the top, sides, and bottom are flattened.

The subject is a female, as can be deduced from her plastically modeled breasts. Her arms are bent at the elbow and rest across the chest; the fingertips of her open hands are touching. Her head is large relative to her short neck and upper body. The large, rimmed eyes dominate her U-shaped face (ratio width to length: 1:1.15); the pupils are drilled and were originally inlaid; and the barely curved brows are incised in the supra-orbital ridges. The forehead is wide; the nose is triangular and short relative to long flat cheeks; and the chin is prominent (ratio forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1:1.1:1.2). The mouth is small and straight, with protruding lips, and extends barely beyond the width of the nose. The right ear is ornamented with an incision, and the left is damaged. The preserved nipple of the right breast is indicated as a raised disk.

The design of the figure is a variation of the well-known motif of a worshiper, which has a long tradition in the Ancient Near East, and was also popular in South Arabia. Its purpose was to ensure the eternal communion of the individual with the worshiped deity, while the image served as a funeral monument or a votive figure most probably in a sacred shrine or temple.

Parallels and Comparisons: Cleveland (1965), 23–24, pls. 42, 44–48; Church Falls, American Foundation of the Study of Man, TC 1557, see Simpson (2002), 199, no. 281; Aden, The National Museum, AM 749, see Doe (1971), pl. 20 = CSAI I, 215; Stuttgart, Linden Museum, see Müller (1973), 50–53 = CSAI I, 705; London, Christie's, Manson & Woods, Wednesday, 2 December 1970, 31, lot 98; London, Christie's, Monday, 3 December 1973, 20, lot 26; Private Collection, see Bron (1985), 97–98, pl. 9 = CSAI I, 281; Paris, Arts d'Orient, Wednesday, 13–Thursday, 14 February 2002, 112–13, lot 401.

Plate 27 Head-Stela of a Smiling Woman with Long Hair

3rd–1st century BC. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 20 cm, W. 15 cm, D. 10 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), Monday, 24 July 1967, 24, lot 105. Walters Art Museum, 21.29.

The head is made of evenly colored, light tan, poorly translucent calcite-alabaster. The condition of the figure is relatively good, and there are few imperfections of the surface except at the root of the nose. The sculpture is of a woman with long hair that frames her face and neck and that leaves her ears uncovered. The face, ears, and neck are smooth, and the curly hair is slightly textured by short lines and notches. The face is oval (ratio width to length: 1:1.1), and the ears are in proportion (ratio forehead to nose to mouth/chin section: 1:1.6:1.6). The supra-orbital ridges, protruding nose, full cheeks, chin, and ears are plastically modeled. There are two naso-labial furrows that run from the inner corners of the eyes past the corners of the mouth and continue to the chin. The outlines of the almond-shaped eyes are incised; the pupils are depressed disks; the

eyebrows are curved; the mouth is smiling; and the nostrils are drilled. A single horizontal bridge, perhaps indicating a necklace, ornaments the neck. The closest parallels to this piece have been excavated in Mārib, and the head is likely from there or the Jawf region.

Parallels and Comparisons: Fakhry (1951), pl. XLIII, second row from top, left; Falls Church, American Foundation for the Study of Man, TC 1589, see Cleveland (1965), 7, pl. 14; London, Gimpel Fils (1970), no. 9; Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, YM 273 (from Mārib), see Costa (1978), 22, no. 3, pl. V; Louvre, AO 4605 and AO 5969 (MNB 2025), see Calvet/Robin (1997), 124–25, no. 44; and 126–27, no. 50. Gunter (2005), 94; New York, Arte Primitivo, 03/21 2005, see https://www.arteprimitivo.com/script/detail.asp?LOT_Num=110902.

Plate 28 Stela with Representation of a Seated Woman

2nd–1st century BC. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 22.5 cm, W. 14.5 cm, D. 4 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), Tuesday, 26 November 1968, 17, lot 28. Walters Art Museum, 21.48.

The trapezoidal stela is made of light beige calcite-alabaster with areas of reddish brown in the lower right and left corners. The piece is well preserved and has only minor losses at the edges of the frame that encloses the figural panel in the upper section. The top of the slab is wider than the bottom, and two holes to the right and left of the shoulders of the seated figure are drilled diagonally, presumably to mount the stela on a wall or in a niche. The front of the stela is polished, while the top, sides, and back are roughly flattened. The figural panel is slightly recessed into the block and is enclosed by a band-like undecorated frame, the lower section of which contains an inscription. The female figure is in raised relief and is shown in profile. She is seated on a folding stool with X-shaped legs and a cushioned seat. The woman raises her bent left arm and holds her open hand in front of her face; her right arm hangs down by her side, and the hand clasps a bundle of what may be wheat or millet. She wears a richly gathered, long costume with short sleeves. Her feet are covered, perhaps with shoes. Her hair is short and arranged in two zones of strands and locks, which do not cover the ears. The face has a large incised eye, a strong protruding nose, an open mouth, and a pointed chin. The cheeks are large. The image appears serious, and the open mouth suggests that a spell or prayer is being spoken, an interpretation that is supported by the raised hand. The inscription below the panel is incised with fine, slim letters. It contains the name of the seated woman and the name of her clan:

Ḥywt /Ḍmrn

This given name suggests that the object came from Ḥayd ibn 'Aqīl; other stelae with these names are known to come from Qatabānean and Minean sites (see Harding [1971], 212, 385). The name of the clan appears also on another stela in this collection (see pl. 49).

Published: CIAS I (1977), 451–52; CIAS P 49/s 4/98. Fr; called "Foster 6"; CSAI I, 304.

Parallels and Comparisons: The Yemen National Museum, YM 386, see Simpson (2002), 95, no. 99.

Plate 29 Stela with Female Bust

1st century BC–1st century AD. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 32.1 cm, W. 23.3 cm, D. 3.5 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London) between 1963 and 1971. Walters Art Museum, 21.73.

The stela is of good-quality calcite-alabaster with a few reddish-brown veins. The overall condition is excellent except for the missing lower right-hand corner below the figure's right elbow. The front of the relief is highly polished, whereas the top, sides, and back are only roughly flattened. Two circular holes were drilled into each side of the neck to hold a necklace or to attach the piece to either a wall or to the niche of a temple, shrine, or tomb (see pl. 28). The subject is a roundel of a plastically modeled upper torso and arms of a female figure in raised relief, whose head extends beyond the roundel's frame at the top. The image is on a rectangular integral slab that provides both a background and a pseudo-base. The woman wears a tight-fitting, sheath-like short-sleeved garment (see pl. 12, 20, and 28) with a wide, round neckline. Thin,

seam-like borders finish both the sleeves and the neckline, and a similar seam runs over the shoulders to join the neckline to each sleeve. The figure's hair is parted in the center and is combed back over her head. Her accessories include a single armlet on each upper arm, two bracelets on the left wrist and three on the right, and a single-strand necklace of rod- and disk-shaped beads with duck-head terminals. The right arm is bent at the elbow and the hand is raised, with the open palm facing the viewer. The left arm is likewise bent at the elbow and rests, slightly elevated, on her chest, its fisted hand grasping a trapezoidal-shaped attribute ornamented with V-shaped incisions, most probably a sheaf of wheat. The round face of the woman (ratio width to length: 1:1) is serious, modeled with restraint, and well proportioned. The forehead is prominent, the cheeks are full, and a round chin protrudes. Her eyes are rimmed with drilled pupils that were originally inlaid, and her brows are incised into the supra-orbital ridges that coalesce into the bridge of a triangular-shaped nose with drilled nostrils. The lips are plastically modeled, and the mouth is straight, with the upper lip somewhat longer and less fleshy than the lower. The identification of the woman is still controversial: she is either the goddess dhāt-Ḥimyam or a priestess.

However, there is little evidence for human-like deities in ancient South Arabia, and the inscription that indicates a male donor makes it unlikely that the figure is a goddess. More likely she is a priestess who intercedes to the divinity on behalf of the donor. If the figure is a goddess, the raised hand would indicate a blessing or apotropaic gesture, and the wheat bundle would represent a symbol of food, implying fecundity; if the figure is a priestess, the raised arm would be a symbol of worship or intercession, and the sheaf of wheat a request for food and fecundity. In any event, the high quality of this stela implies importance, and it was probably produced in a royal workshop. The one-line inscription on the pseudo-base lacks one or two letters, on the corner that is missing (viewer's left).

R t d m / d t [. . .]

"Rathadum of [the clan]"

The given name is known (Harding [1971], 289).

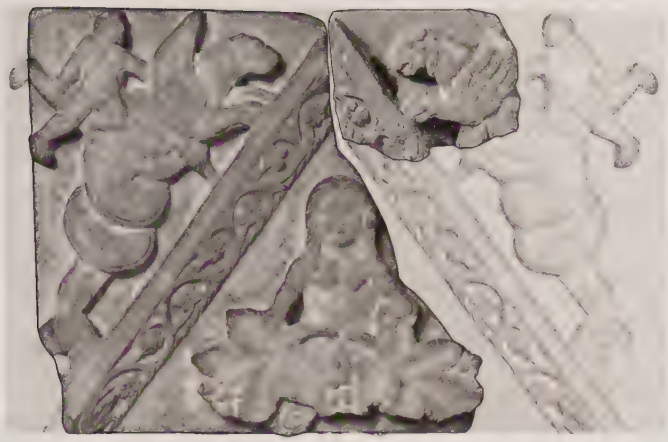
Published: CIAS I (1977), 429–31; CIAS P 45/s 4/98. Fr, called "Foster 4"; CSAI I, 301.

Parallels and Comparisons: For the closest parallel, Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, YM 71, see Seipel (1999), 333–34, no. 273; for other parallels: Aden, The National Museum, AM 367, 368, 729, see CSAI I, 214, 299, 302; see also: Pirenne (1960), 326–46, pl. XIV and XV, and Pirenne (1962), 258–59, no. 10, pl. XV.

Plate 30 Fragment of a Pediment with Goddess

2nd century AD. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 50 cm, W. 55 cm, D. 9.5 cm. From Mārib, gift of Imam Ahmed, King of Yemen, to Dr. Foster in 1962. It was stolen during the revolts in September 1962 after the death of the Imam. It appeared again in May–June 1963 in the Wādī Bayḥān, where it was bought by James Nash, who in 1964 brought it to London, where in 1965 Dr. Foster purchased it. Walters Art Museum, TL 2007.17.55.

The sculpture is of nearly white calcite-alabaster. The principal carvings in high relief are well preserved without appreciable losses. All of the surfaces of the figures and the architectural elements are uniformly polished, and the background is smooth. There are two vignettes, separated by a diagonally aligned architectural element running from the viewer's lower left to the upper right, the underside of which is decorated with a vine scroll. The upper left vignette is of a composite beast that is an Asiatic lion-headed animal with a long, curled, serpent-like body, a fishtail, wings affixed at the shoulders, and a floral ornament for forepaws. A nude youth faces to his left, with the knee of his bent left leg on one of the animal's coils while his left hand grasps a wing and his right hand holds a short sword by his side. The boy wears a bracelet and two armlets. A much smaller fragment in the British Museum (London, The British Museum, ANE 1996-7-13,1) appears to be this vignette's analogue in the form of a similar but antithetically arranged composite beast. The second vignette is to the right of the diagonal element and contains a frontally designed female figure. This female has tresses of her hair cascading over her shoulders and onto her upper arms. She wears a beaded necklace and armlets. Her torso is covered below the



Proposed reconstruction of the pediment pl. 30, including fragment ANE 1996–7–13, 1 of the British Museum, London (© The Trustees of the British Museum / © reconstruction: R. Schulz)

level of her navel with elaborate grape leaves and three bunches of grapes. The piece has three finished edges: the top, the proper right and the bottom. The top and the viewer's left side are carved flat and have a series of tool marks that are parallel to the side of the relief. The bottom edge is carved with a 3 cm. extending ledge that may have served to attach the section to another. Originally this piece and the piece in the British Museum were likely to have been joined together with the two diagonal elements meeting to form an upward-pointing chevron, within which the female figure sits.

Inasmuch as these figures are unique and exquisitely rendered in calcite-alabaster as fine as can be found in Southern Arabia, it is reasonable to conclude not only that they are of great importance, but also that the female figure is a local goddess. Two other observations support this view: first, the female is presented as a fertility divinity distinguished by her nudity and her grapes; second, she was found in arguably the most important archaeological site in Yemen. Her name, and that of her accompanying young male figure on the serpent, are not known, as there are no inscriptions. Two provocative parallels in the Near East do exist. One is a figure of Tyche adorning the keystone of the arch of the Temple of Hadrian at Ephesus (see Erdemgil [1989], 61, fig. 53) that is similarly portrayed as a female nude torso with grapes and grape leaves. Tyche was a deity of chance and fortune, often serving as a guardian of a city. She appears in Hellenistic times and became known as Fortuna during the Roman Period. Another is Atargatis, a Syrian deity, portrayed with a fish body and tail at Ascalon and in Diodorus Siculus. Her head appears on a Palmyrene coin whose obverse has the head of an Asiatic lion. She and her consort, Hadad, also frequently served as protectors of cities; her temple at Ascalon had a fishpond; and the last syllable of her name, *ketos,* may relate to the Greek *gados,* meaning fish, and whose cognate means "sea monster." Another late love and fertility goddess was Aphrodite, who likewise is usually portrayed naked and likewise had her origin in the sea. These examples strongly suggest that female fertility deities in various parts of the Near East shared their origins in a common *koine.*

Published: Fakhry (1951), 130–32, pl. XLIX; Pirenne (1957), 103–8, pl. VIIa; Doe (1971), pl. 9; Mandel (1976), 113. A piece of the same pediment is in London, The British Museum, ANE 1996-7-13, 1, see Simpson (2002), 150, no. 191; Radt (1973), 7–8, no. 10, pl. 4.

Parallels and Comparisons: For the goddess: in Ephesus, see Erdemgil (1989), 61, fig. 55; in Khirbet el-Tammur, see Markoe (2002), 15, fig. 4; in Bel: Bounni (1988), 45. For the marine creature, see Seyrig (1934), 168.

Plate 31 Relief with Vine Tendrils

2nd century AD. Calcite-Alabaster; W. 39 cm, H. 29 cm, D. 4 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), Monday, 1 February 1971, 20, lot 81. Walters Art Museum, 21.67.

The relief, which is made of a reddish variety of banded calcite-alabaster, is a rectangular architectural fragment, and its original orientation is unknown. It is divided along its longest axis into two registers separated by a fascia and framed by two additional fascias at the sides. Both registers contain vine scrolls with bunches of grapes and their leaves. The vine tendrils are in raised relief with a central incised line and lateral incisions that indicate the veining of leaves. The layout is such that the upper and the lower vine scroll motifs are offset by one scroll element so that opposing leaves alternate pointing toward and away from each other. The surface of the vine tendrils, along with the leaves, fruit, and frame, are polished, and the background is smooth.

The design of the vine scroll is similar to a relief in the British Museum, and both fragments may be from the same structure. Both appear indebted to an international *koine* (see pl. 30), examples of which are found on monuments in Syria (see Simpson 2002, 108–9), Egypt, and many cities of the Roman Empire.

Parallels and Comparisons: Radt (1973), 8, nos. 12b, 14, pls. 5–6; London, The British Museum, ANE 134886, see Simpson (2002), 108–9, no. 121; Gunter (2005), no. 33; Cairo, The Coptic Museum, 8260, Gabra (1993).

Plate 32. Head of a Ram

1st century BC–2nd century AD. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 5.7 cm, W. 4.5 cm, D. 6.5 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), Monday, 19 October 1970, 19, lot 96. Walters Art Museum, 21.58.

The calcite-alabaster ram's head is well executed and almost complete. Missing is the inlay of the eyes, the right side of the neck, and small chips from the lateral aspect of the horns' midsection and tip of the lower jaw. In addition, there are several minor surface imperfections. The neck tapers slightly, and likely it was inserted into another, now lost object. The face is plastically modeled; the eyes are rimmed; the mouth is incised; the interior of the long, projecting ears are deeply carved; and the lateral aspects of the horns, which wind around the ears, are naturally portrayed and have concave grooves. The front and sides of the head are smoothly rendered, while wool on the dorsal aspect of the neck is stylistically represented by a corn-on-the-cob pattern.

The animal is probably *Ovis platyura aegyptiaca* (see Osborn 1998, 192–94). It is identified as a ram rather than an ibex because of the configuration of its horns, which encircle the ears and end beneath the eyes at the level of the jaws. Rams are not known to play a role in the South Arabian iconography, therefore the image possibly was influenced by Egyptian or Nubian sources, where rams are associated with the god Amun. The horns of Amun were adopted by Alexander the Great as his head insignia after he visited Egypt. Despite the similarity to Egyptian ram's head representations, the fleece pattern on the neck and inlaid eyes are strikingly different. Even though there are many ram images in the Near East, there are very few in South Arabian sculpture.

Parallels and Comparisons: For a whole figure, see Christie's (New York), Tuesday, 6 December 2007, 69, lot. 78. For ram-headed Egyptian amulets, see Andrews (1994), 31.

Plate 33 Fragment of a Stela with Head of a Bull

2nd–1st century BC. Quartzite; H. 18 cm, W. 19.5 cm, D. 5 cm. Acquired in Ta'izz (Yemen) by Dr. Foster from an art dealer named Ahmed in 1962. Walters Art Museum, 21.39.

The piece is of dark quartzite and has three sections executed in raised relief, with sides that are irregularly broken off and a rear that is roughly flattened. It belonged originally to a decorative frieze and probably served as an architectural adjunct or detail on a large stela. The upper section of the front is a horizontal border with a small, unidentifiable image. The two lower metope-like sections are separated by what appears to be a pillar with a four-stage capital, each with a bull's head in frontal view. The segment to the viewer's left is largely preserved, with only the muzzle missing. The segment to the right is nearly destroyed: only one ear and horn are recognizable.

The stylized head is well executed; the hair around the horns is draped on the forehead in a triangular ornament with regularly spaced rows. Incised semicircles frame the large, protruding eyes, and small crosses line the insides of the ears. An ornamental element with double volutes on both sides, perhaps a stylized acanthus leaf, rises up from the top of the head between the horns. Triangular drapery of the bull's forehead hair is conventional in South Arabian bull imagery (cf. pl. 36). Elements less often seen on the head are a thunderbolt bundle (Vienna, Sem 24) and a "Tree of Life" with flanking ibexes (Ibb, IM 19).

The bull is related to several South Arabian deities including the Sabaean god 'Almaqah, Sami', god of the Jawf region, and the Ḥaḍramawtean god, Sayīn. In each instance it is likely that the bull represents renewal and recreation (see Calvet/Robin 1997, 72–73).

Parallels and Comparisons: Cleveland (1965), 36, pl. 61, TC 696; Daum (1999), 133, pl. 1; Radt (1973), 12, no. 46, pl. 18 (with acanthus leaf), and 18, no. 96, pl. 35 (with thunderbolt); Vienna, Museum of Art History, Egyptian-Oriental Collection, Sem 24, see Seipel (1998), 315–16, no. 222; Ibb, Ibb Museum, IM 19, see Seipel (1998), 369–70, no. 416.

Plate 34 Statue of a Bull

1st century BC–2nd century AD. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 8.8 cm, W. 4.1 cm, D. 11 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), Monday, 19 October 1970, 19, lot 96. Walters Art Museum, 21.55.

The figure is made of good-quality greenish-yellow translucent calcite-alabaster with several reddish-brown veins. The horns, most of both ears, the tip of the muzzle, part of the front of the base, and the left front hoof are missing. The statuette is polished, and the base between the legs is smooth. Similar examples suggest that the figure was probably inserted in an additional base with sides that might have been stepped.

The animal is standing at ease, with each pair of the forelegs and hind legs even and parallel, the head slightly bowed, and the tail hanging straight down. The shape of the legs and the tail, as well as the vestiges of horns and ears, identify the animal as a bovine, and the body proportions, the supple modeling, and absence of deep incisions support the conclusion that it is young. The pupils of the protruding eyes are drilled and were originally inlaid. The stone beneath the animal's belly and between its legs is not cut away. This negative space is defined by flat surfaces between all four legs, which merge with the integral base. Similar small bull figures have been excavated at Mārib displaying the matrix between the animals' belly and legs.

Parallels and Comparisons: Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, YM 288 (from Mārib, 'Awwām temple), see Costa (1978), 34, no. 55, pl. XIVa = Albright (1958), 273, no. 49; for further bull sculptures see nos. 50–63; Ṣana'ā', Military Museum, 194, see Seipel (1998), 371, no. 419; New York, Christie's, Wednesday, 11 June 2003, 77, lot 89.

Plate 35 Head of a Large Bull Figure

1st–2nd century AD. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 22 cm, W. 15 cm, D. 15.5 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's in London between 1963 and 1971. Walters Art Museum, 21.62.

The head is of very high-quality banded translucent calcite-alabaster; it is broken at the neck and is missing its horns. Whether it was part of a complete bull's figure or a protoma is uncertain. However, the vertical alignment of the neck, despite the break, increases the likelihood that it was originally part of a bull statue. If it was a statue, it must have been approximately 70 cm long and 60 cm high. The object is in very good condition. The surface is highly polished; the features are plastically modeled; and the incised lines are exquisitely executed. The skin folds—five are supra-orbital, seven are on the neck, and three are above the muzzle—all appear in well-defined and exquisitely artful patterns. The rimmed lids of the eyes are elegantly curved, and the antithetically placed, trapezoidal nostrils are deeply cut into the surface. The interior of the nostrils is not polished and, like the eyes, may have been inlaid. The cheeks are full; the lips are well formed; and the lower jaw is recessed beneath the projecting upper jaw. A drilled hole in the top of the head may have been for an attribute, and such attributes are known in bas-reliefs of bulls (see. pl. 33) and in three-dimensional bronze figures found on Jabal al-Lawdh (see Seipel [1998], 369–70, no. 316). However, an attribute in a bull's statue made of stone is unique. The closest stylistic parallels to this piece are from Timna' and date to the 1st–3rd centuries AD.

Parallels and Comparisons: Falls Church, American Foundation for the Study of Man, TC 1390 (from Timna', alabaster), see Cleveland (1965), 39, pl. 63; for further parallels, 38–39, pls. 62–63; Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, YM 288 (from Mārib, alabaster and limestone), see Costa (1978), 34, no. 55, pl. XIVa = Albright (1958), 273, no. 49; for further bull sculptures see nos. 50–63; Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, YM 16302 (limestone), see Seipel (1998), 341–42, no. 306; London, The British Museum, ANE 1971-2-27,1=135562 (bronze), see Simpson (2002), 174, no. 224.

Plate 36 Bull's Head Protoma

2nd century BC–2nd century AD. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 13.2 cm, W. 10.8 cm, D. 6.4 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London) between 1963 and 1971. Walters Art Museum, 21.40.

This protoma is of evenly colored pale beige calcite-alabaster without veins. The surfaces are smooth; the front is polished; and the flat rear is covered with plaster. The otherwise well-preserved head is missing the tip of its left horn. The stylized features of the bull's head are traditional. The chaplet around the horns and the triangular draped hair on the forehead are typical South Arabian elements (see pl. 33) on bull's heads

on stelae and altar spouts. The incised, stylized hair is arranged in four rows. The eyes project from the sides of the head, and four incised, concentrically arranged curved lines indicate the eye, lid, and eyebrow on each side. The nasal folds are executed by three bow-shaped lines in parallel, and the nostrils by triangles. An incised line beneath them represents the mouth. The thin, flat layer of plaster on the rear confirms that it was most likely a protoma for a stela (cf. pl. 37 and 38). Renewal of life is associated with the bull in the South Arabian region and occurs frequently on stelae found in cemeteries like Ḥayd ibn ʿAqīl.

Parallels and Comparisons: Aden, The National Museum, AM 60785, see CSAI I, 249 = Jamme (1971), 127–28; Stuttgart, Linden Museum, A 37551, see Daum (1999), 292, 83M; Paris, Private Collection, see CSAI I, 368 = Bron (2000), 230; Mārib, Mārib Museum, BAR 205, see Simpson (2002), 149–50, no. 190; Aden, The National Museum, NAM 1307, see CSAI I, 318, and CSAI II, 369–70; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania University Museum, 30.47.26, see CIAS I (1977), 515–16 = CSAI I, 322.

Plate 37 Stela with Head of a Bull

1st century BC–1st century AD. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 27 cm, W. 16 cm, D. 3.5 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London) between 1963 and 1971. Walters Art Museum, 21.51.

The piece is of light-yellow translucent calcite-alabaster. It is well preserved despite being chipped near the top (to the viewer's right), and missing the horns of the bull. The front surface is polished; the sides are smooth; and the rear is rough. The stela was likely designed for a niche rather than a base (cf. pl. 44–49), as suggested by remnants of stucco on its back.

The stela is of a rectangular slab with a projecting pseudo-base and the bull's head, which is slightly above the stela's center. The well-executed bull's head is plastically modeled. The large eyes are deeply cut; the pupils are drilled and originally were inlaid; and the curved eyelid folds and brow are incised. The bases of the horns protrude from the forehead directly above the eyes and the ears, which flank the upper head. The nostrils are indicated by S-shaped incisions, and the mouth by a shallow groove around the muzzle. The proportions of the *bucranium,* with its rounded forms, suggest that a young bull is represented (see pl. 36). Two close parallels, which display the same juvenile characteristics and similar horns, were excavated in Timna' at the Ḥayd ibn ʿAqīl cemetery (Falls Church, American Foundation for the Study of Man, TC 1519, 1686). On the base panel of the stela is an inscription with the name of the female deceased owner (see Harding [1971], 513) and the name of her Qatabānean clan (see Harding [1971], 682):

Lḥy-ʿṯt / D-Yl̓ġb

Publications: CIAS I (1977), 509–10 (CIAS S 56/s 4/47.12, called "Foster 9"); CSAI I, 320.

Parallels and Comparisons: Jamme (1955), 121–22, no. 391, pl. 23 (from Wādī Bayḥān); Falls Church, American Foundation for the Study of Man, TC 1519, 1686, see Cleveland (1965), 40–41, pls. 64–65 = Seipel (1998), 354, no. 352 and 355, no. 353; London, Gimpel Fils (1970), no. 41; Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, YM 70 (from al-Jubah), see Costa (1978), 27, no. 29, pl. VIII d; Jerusalem, The Israel Museum, see CSAI I, 1065 = Merhav (1981), 169–70; London, Sotheby Parke Bernet & Co., Monday, 10 April 1978, 43, lot 141; Paris, Arts d'Orient, Wednesday, 13–Thursday, 14 February 2002, 112–13, lot 403; London, The British Museum, ANE 141540, see Bron (2006), 191, fig. 2. For a similar example but with separated base: Detroit, Detroit Institute of Arts, 51.293, see http://www.dia.org/collections/ancient/sarabiansculpture/51.293.

Plate 38 Stela with Head of a Bull

3rd century BC–1st century AD. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 17.3 cm, W. 9.7 cm, D. 4 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London) between 1963 and 1971. Walters Art Museum, 21.41.

The stela is of banded alabaster with several yellow-brown veins running vertically. Approximately one third of the right side is missing. The front is highly polished, the sides are smooth, and the rear is roughly flattened. The stela likely was inserted into a base or wall niche in a tomb. A raised band-like frame is at the top and to the viewer's right; the top section car-

ries an inscription. Frames like this are rare on bull's head stelae, which normally are frameless and have their inscriptions at the base or directly below the head. There are, however, many variations of *bucranium* stelae. The head can be at different heights on the same slab; it can be attached to a different slab; or the inscription can be in different locations. In this instance, the bull's head rises in relief from the undecorated surface of the upper third of the slab's central field. The elongated, stylized head has short horns, protruding eyes, and a round muzzle. The curved lines that indicate the eyes and nasal folds are incised and appear worn. The incised inscription on the top panel of the band-like frame, when read from right to left, is a person's name, with the last letter lost. If the last letter is restored with an *m* or the feminine ending *t,* the name reads either

ʿrsm (or) *ʿrst*

respectively, and spells a name related to the Northern Arabian Safaitic language (see Harding [1971], 415). Many bull's head stelae have been excavated at the Qatabānean cemetery at Timna', Ḥayd ibn 'Aqīl; nevertheless, this example is unique because of its frame and the low relief of the bull's head.

Published: CIAS I/2 (1977), 403–4 (called "Foster 19").

Parallels and Comparisons: Cleveland (1965), 36–43, pls. 62–68. For an example with *bucranium* in raised relief and with a frame, but executed in different style, see Paris, Louvre AO 4562, see Calvet/Robin (1997), 113, no. 24.

Plate 39 Miniature Offering Table with Bull's Head

6th–4th century BC. Limestone; H. 2 cm, W. 4.7 cm, D. 6.6 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London) between 1963 and 1971. Walters Art Museum, 21.60.

The square miniature offering table has raised borders around its top, creating a shallow reservoir for water or other libation. Its long, rectangular projection contains a trough for the evacuation of liquid and ends in a bull's head finial. The bull's features are plastically modeled with short horns and ears, protruding eyes, and a well-defined muzzle. A deep incision serves to separate the head of the bull from the rectangular trough. This miniature libation table was used as funerary equipment, with its bull's head serving as a symbol for renewal of life after death. In the 'Awwām cemetery at Mārib many tombs contained miniature objects, some of which are objects of daily life, while others are ritual instruments. Both types served as offerings.

Parallels and Comparisons: Mārib, Mārib Museum, AW 97 A 763, see Seipel (1998), 347–48, no. 330 = Simpson (2002), 203, no. 295; London, Christie's, Wednesday, 5 December 1973. 27, lot 102.

Plate 40 Fragment of a Stela with Ibex and Oryx Antelopes

5th–4th century BC. Limestone; H. 17 cm, W. 24 cm, D. 8.2 cm. Acquired by Carolyn Foster from Royal-Athena Galleries in New York, 10 November 1987. Royal-Athena purchased it from Sotheby's London, see Sotheby's (London) 14 July 1986, 119, no. 118. It was previously exhibited in 1960 in Durham, Bowes Museum (Barnard Castle); and from 1960 to 1970 in Birmingham, City Art Gallery and Museum. Walters Art Museum, 21.38.

The fragment is part of the upper left corner of a stela. A computer generated figure illustrates the likely position of this segment in a border of squares. To the left is a side view of a right-facing recumbent ibex (viewer's right), and to the right of the ibex three identical antelope heads face straight ahead. The recumbent ibex is missing its hindquarters. It conforms to the traditional Sabaean representation (see Avanzini [2005], 144–53): the legs are bent under the body, and the massive horns of the head are upright (see. pl. 41). The three stylized heads of Arabian oryx antelopes (*Oryx leucoryx)* rest on the upper frame. The elongated element between their horns may be a bundle of vegetable elements. The animals are plastically modeled with incised eyes, nostrils, and muzzles. The oryx was related to several gods including 'Athtar and 'Almaqah, and there is no doubt that such a frieze of oryx heads had not only a decorative function, but animal magical qualities as well. The addition of the vegetal bundles between the horns suggests a festive event. Examples of stelae with similar motifs are found in the forecourt of the Ba'rān temple at Mārib.

Parallels and Comparisons: Rossini (1926–27), 742;

Proposed reconstruction of a stela including the fragment pl. 40 (lightly shaded; © reconstruction: R. Schulz)

Proposed reconstruction of a stela including the fragment pl. 41 (lightly shaded; © reconstruction: R. Schulz)

Rome, Roman National Museum, MNR 12.1054, see Jamme (1956), 54, no. 431, pl. V = AnIY, fig. 82; Bowen (1958), p. 270 n. 5; Cleveland (1965), 31, pl. 54, TC 900; Daum (1999), 98; Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, YM 11126 (from as-Sawdā') and YM 14329 (from Mārib, Ba'rān temple) 14329, see Seipel (1998), 321, no. 323 = CIAS I, 291 ff.; and 322, no. 237 = Nebes (1992), 160–64; London, The British Museum, ANE 135307, see http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/compass.

Plate 41 Fragment of a Stela with Ibexes

8th–7th century BC. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 18.3 cm, W. 13.8 cm, D. 3.4 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), Monday, 1 February 1971, 20, lot 81. Walters Art Museum, 21.37.

The fragment is of two semi-recumbent ibexes, which were part of an ibex frieze. This frieze probably framed a stela, the central field of which most likely had a dedicatory inscription. Such stelae have been found in Sabaean and Madhabian sites, like the Bar'ān temple in Mārib (Ṣana'ā', YM 14329) and Nashān (Ṣana'ā', YM 11126 and 11192), and on Jabal al-Lawdh (Wissmann [1982], photo 2). The stela is made of evenly colored calcite-alabaster, the front and rear surfaces of which are polished. The upper ibex is complete except for its horns, and the lower ibex has only its head and horns. Each ibex is in its own metope-like frame facing to the viewer's right which is the center of the stela, with muzzle, horns, and tail each touching the frames. The images are in raised relief with flat surfaces; only the muzzles and round eyes are incised. Each animal rests with its legs bent on the ground and its head and tail raised, conveying an attitude of attentiveness. The massive horns curve over the back and cover much of the image field. A fragment with an ibex facing to the viewer's right from the same or similar stela was offered by Christie's (London) in October, 2007. Further fragments with ibexes facing left are from Mārib and are now in the Yemen National Museum in Ṣana'ā'. Ibexes as decorative motives are popular in South Arabian art and have a religious connotation, perhaps related to sacred hunts for the prominent deities. While the ibex was unrelated to a specific deity, it may represent nature's vital energy or the power of the wild (see Calvet/Robin [1997], 73; Avanzini [2005], 144). Inserting a resting ibex into a metope, and using it to frame a stela, may not only convey control over the wild powers, but also signify protection. The epithet "God of ibexes" was used for the principal gods as 'Almaqah of Saba' and 'Amm of Qatabān (see Avanzini [2005], 152, fn. 1), an indication of the importance of the ibex in South Arabian religion.

Parallels and Comparisons: Fakhry (1951), 124–25; Rathjens (1955), 122, photo 454; Doe (1971), pl. 7; Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, see Radt (1973), 11, nos. 39a–c, pl. 14; Wissmann (1982), photo 2; Schmidt (1987), 70, lower left; Calvet/Robin (1997), 73; Vienna, Museum of Art History, Egyptian-Oriental Collection, Sem 125, see Seipel (1998), 319–20, no. 231; Ṣana'ā', National Museum, 11126 and 11192, see Avanzini (2005), 147, figs. 4 and 6; New York, Christie's, Wednesday, 12 June 2002, 202, lot 364; London, Christie's, Thursday, 25 October 2007, lot 262.

Plate 42 Frieze with Oryx Antelope Heads

5th–3rd century BC. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 55.8 cm, W. 12.5 cm, D. 10.8 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London) between 1963 and 1971. Walters Art Museum, 21.65.

This vertical frieze fragment has three nearly identical representations of oryx antelopes heads with vegetable elements between the horns (see. pl. 40). The back is flat, and the top and left-hand side are polished, which is compatible with a fragment from the upper left-hand corner of a stela. The upper surfaces of each head, as well as the framing elements of the metopes that they occupy, are polished, but the negative space between those heads and the sides of the metopes are rough. The attribute between the horns appears to be a vegetable element. The image of one of the oryx heads is on a postage stamp printed by Yemen postal authorities.

Parallels and Comparisons: Bowen (1958), 286, fig. 207, and 289, fig. 208; Daum (1999), 98.

Plate 43 Frieze with Animals and Trees

5th–3rd century BC. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 10.9 cm, W. 48.7 cm, D. 3.5 cm. Gift of Imam Ahmed, King of Yemen, to Dr. Foster in 1961. It was stolen during the revolts in September 1962 after the death of the Imam and appeared again in London, where it was sold at Sotheby's sometime between 1963 and 1971, at which time Dr. Foster purchased it. Walters Art Museum, 21.71.

The frieze is of a fine, slightly banded calcite-alabaster. It was broken into two parts during the civil war in Yemen sometime after September 1962. The longer right section was used as a fire stick, consequently it is now darker than its mate. Besides the broken sides, the top and side edges also have minor losses and some chipping. The front surface is polished, the sides are smooth, and the back is flattened. The question of whether this panel was a stand-alone sculpture or part of a larger composition is moot, although the finished surfaces of the outer edges suggest that the panel is a complete and independent object.

There are traces of pigment on the relief: red in the mouth and eyes of the lion at far left, green or black in the spots of the "leopard" on the right and perhaps some additional pigment in the recesses of the leaves of the trees.

This relief is of two antithetically opposed scenes. In the one to the viewer's left a lion is attacking a gazelle. Although the head of the predator is canine-like, the other elements of body form, especially the round ears and long, curved tail, identify the animal as a feline. Additionally, the style of attack—jumping onto the prey's backside, grabbing it with the front claws and stabbing its teeth into its rear end—is characteristic of cats of prey. The gazelle tries to run away and is turning its head backward as a rabbit tries to jump away from the gazelle's forelegs. The scene is set in a landscape rich in flora and fauna. There are two acacia trees in the background, and a bird has alighted on one of the branches of the left tree. In the scene to the viewer's right a leopard is attacking an ibex. The wild cat is jumping from a stone or small hill onto the backside of his prey, which it holds with its claws. Two birds observe the scene from the safety of trees behind the leopard. The ibex turns his back to his attacker and tries to escape by jumping over a bush. A small rodent is scurrying away to escape the hoofs of the ibex. The central element between both scenes is the largest of the four trees pictured in the frieze. Three birds are perched in its top branches, two facing to the right and one to the left.

The scenery is highly sophisticated. Although the two main motifs are antithetically arranged, no repetition is intended. The overlapping of animals and trees suggests three-dimensionality, and the posture of the creatures, vital movement. Only the birds in the trees convey a more tranquil mood. They are observers, but their interest is clearly defined by their line of body and sight. The execution of the details is exceptional for South Arabian sculpture, especially in the spiral-shaped skin markings on the shoulders of the ibex, the growth rings on the horns of both ibex and gazelle, the short mane of the Asiatic lion, the feathers of the birds, the fangs of the lion, and the wounds on the backside of the ibex. The antithetical arrangement of the two animals as hunter and prey in landscapes dominated by trees is traditional in almost all Ancient Near Eastern cultures, from depictions on chlorite vessels of the Jiroft Culture and cylinder seals of the 3rd–2nd millennium BC to the art of the Achaemenid and Sasanian Periods, which feature scenes of animals, especially pairs of either ibexes or goats, arranged antithetically around a so-called "Tree of Life." The perpetuation of such long-lived traditions demonstrates just how related certain aspects of South Arabian art are to adjacent antecedent cultures.

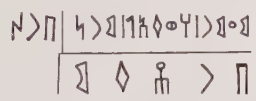
Parallels and Comparisons: For the leopard, Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, YM 77, see Costa (1978), 44, no. 85. For the trees and ibexes, see Doe (1971), pl. 12.

Plate 44 Trapezoidal Stela with Concave Top

First half of 1st century AD. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 25 cm, W. 16.5 cm, D. 8.4 cm. From Ḥayd ibn 'Aqīl; acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), Monday, 18 May 1970, 17, lot 64. Walters Art Museum, 21.52.

The stela is inserted into a separate two-step base. It is of a light, evenly colored calcite-alabaster with only one red-

dish area; the base is carved of darker, more banded alabaster. The condition is excellent, and there are only minor losses at the edges. The trapezoidal stela has a concave top and straight sides, and its upper part is wider than its lower. The front and sides of the slab and the base are polished; the back is roughly flattened. The slab is slim and elegant, while the broad double base provides a solid foundation. The front of the base has two rows of inscriptions, with the upper one running around the left corner. The letters of the bottom stage are more widely spaced to fill the whole expanse. The inscription reads:


mᶜmr Hwfᵓl Mrn
b-Rṣfm

"[A personal] memorial [for] Hawfi-il
in [the temple] Risafum"

The given name and the clan name in this inscription occur in other Qatabānean dedications (see Harding [1971], 630 and 452), and the name of the temple is shared by other temples in Qatabān and Ma'īn.

Published: CIAS I (1977), 135–38, 487–88; CIAS 47.12/p 2/S 21; CSAI I, 286.

Parallels and Comparisons: For the temple name in Qatabān see CSAI I, 138, and for Ma'īn, see Wissmann (1964), 141, 228, 230 etc.). For the stela, see Cleveland (1965), 44–92.

Plate 45 Trapezoidal Stela with Concave Top

Middle of 2nd century AD. Calcite-Alabaster (banded variety); H. 15 cm, W. 10 cm, D. 8.4 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London) between 1963 and 1971. Walters Art Museum, 21.68.

The well-preserved stela was made from two separate pieces. The front of both parts is polished, and the top and sides are smooth. The back is roughly flattened, and tool marks are visible. The trapezoidal, upright slab has a wide top and a smaller bottom. On the top of the front of the base is a single line of inscription that contains the given name and the clan name of the owner:

Qsdm / ḡrbm

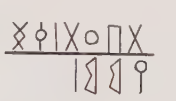
The given name of the owner has no parallel, but the clan name is well known (see pl. 48).

Published: CIAS I (1977) 499–500 = CIAS S 31/s 4/47.12 called "Foster 31"; CSAI I, 312.

Plate 46 Rectangular Stela with Convex Top

1st century AD. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 20 cm, W. 14 cm, D. 5.3 cm. From Ḥayd ibn 'Aqīl; acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), Monday, 18 May 1970, 17, lot 64. Walters Art Museum, 21.53.

The stela is carved from light-colored calcite-alabaster with a darker, more reddish base. The slab of this well-preserved monument has a convex top and straight sides, and is inserted into a two-step pedestal. The front and sides of the slab and the base are polished, while the back is roughly flattened. The inscription on the base fills the entire upper step and half of the lower step, and is written with plain letters:


Tbᶜt Qs-
ymm

The inscription specifies the given name of a woman and the name of her clan. The first name is known from another inscription in Ḥayd ibn 'Aqīl (CIAS I/2 [1977], 340), and the second name, *Qsymm*, is closely paralleled by variations such as *Qsmm* (CIAS I/2 [1977], 340) or *Qsm* (Harding [1971], 482).

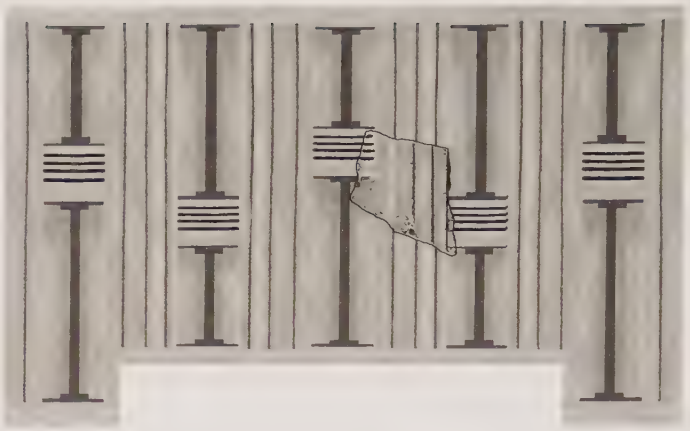
Published: CIAS I (1977), 493–94; CIAS S 23/s 4/47.12 called "Foster 30"; CSAI I,308.

Parallels and Comparisons: Cleveland (1965), 44–92; Stuttgart, Linden Museum, A 37566, see Daum (1999), 294, no. 81M; New York, Christie's, Tuesday, 11 December 2003, 90, lot 130.

Plate 47 Rectangular Stela with Integral Base

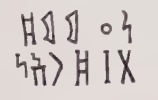
1st century BC–1st century AD. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 10.7 cm, W. 8.6 cm, D. 4 cm. From Ḥayd ibn 'Aqīl; acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London) between 1963 and 1971. Walters Art Museum, 21.56.

The stela and base are carved from the same light-colored calcite-alabaster. The top of the slab has broken off; the



Hypothetical reconstruction of an incense burner including the fragment pl. 50 (bordered; © reconstruction: R. Schulz)

lower edge of the right-hand side is damaged; and the back corner is missing. The front and sides of the stela and base are polished, but the back is rough. The front of the base has two lines of inscription:



N^{c}mm-D "Na^{c}amum
t Dr^{2}n Dhar^{2}an"

The inscription specifies the given name of a woman and her clan name. Both are known in other Qatabānean inscriptions (Harding [1971], 594), especially the clan name (CIAS I/2 (1977), 498).

Published: CIAS I (1977), 497–98; CIAS S 29/s 4/47.12 called "Foster 15"; CSAI I, 308.

Parallels and Comparisons: Cleveland (1965), 44–92; Stuttgart, Linden Museum, A 37566, see Daum (1999), 294, no. 81M; New York, Christie's, Tuesday, 11 December 2003, 90, lot 130.

Plate 48 Base of a Stela

2nd–1st century BC. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 10.9 cm, W. 25.1 cm, D. 22.5 cm. From Ḥayd ibn 'Aqīl; acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London) between 1963 and 1971. Walters Art Museum, 21.66.

The three-step base is of banded calcite-alabaster. The empty central socket indicates that it was intended to hold a slim stela (see pl. 44, 46, 47, 49). There is a loss in the top fascia on the front, and the edges have suffered minor damages. All of the surfaces of the base, including its top, have been polished to the same degree, so it is therefore possible that base and stela were intended to be seen from all sides. The front of the middle step has a single line of inscription with well-cut signs that specify the given and clan names of a man:

Ẓrbm / D-Ġrbm

Both given and clan names are well known (Harding [1971], 392 and 453, and see pl. 45). From an epigraphic point of view, the first sign is rare, and few parallels exist.

Publications: CIAS I (1977), 521–22; CIAS Ss 15/s 4/47.12 called "Foster 10"; CSAI I, 326.

Plate 49 Stela with Integral Base and Concave Top

1st century AD. Calcite-Alabaster; H. 13 cm, W. 6.2 cm, D. 3.2 cm. From Ḥayd ibn 'Aqīl; acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), Monday, 18 May 1970, 17, lot 64. Walters Art Museum, 21.57.

The stela and its pseudo-base are of a high-quality, light, evenly colored calcite-alabaster. The front and top are polished, and the sides and rear are rough. It is slim and elegant, and the base extends only slightly beyond the roof of the slab. The concave top of the stela may be related to the shape of the crescent moon. The inscribed line on the base specifies the given and clan names of a man. These are written in large, slim letters on the base:

S^{c}d- ^{c}m Ḍmrn

Both names are well known (Harding [1971], 319, and see cat. no. 28).

Published: CIAS I (1977), 489–90; CIAS S 21/s 4/47.12 n. 1 called "Foster 44"; CSAI I, 306.

Parallels and Comparisons: Cleveland (1965), 44–53; Doe (1971), pl. 22.

Plate 50 Fragment with Architectural Decor

5th century BC–1st century AD. Sandstone; H. 13.3 cm, W. 11.4 cm, D. 5.5 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster in Yemen in 1962. Walters Art Museum, 21.72.

The fragment displays on the right side a tripartite architectural frame, and a décor of horizontal lines above a niche to its left. A small remainder of the material has been preserved on the right side of the frame, which indicates that there was a second, perhaps similar, motif. Such designs were used in architectural settings for stelae and for ritual objects such as incense burners. Although the whole setting cannot be determined, the width of the niche with its tripartite frame must have measured approximately 26 cm. Most of the stelae or ritual objects have two or three of these pseudo-niches, and therefore the original object must have had a minimum width of 50–75 cm. The architectural elements symbolize a sacred place and convey the ritual function of the original object.

Parallels and Comparisons: Jamme (1956), 53, no. 432, pl. V; Cleveland (1965), pls. 91–96.

Plate 51 Inscribed Fragment of a Stone Vessel

4th–2nd century BC. Banded Limestone; H. 8.3 cm, W. 6.5 cm, D. 1.6 cm. Given to Dr. Foster by the Sultan of Say'ūn in 1962. Walters Art Museum, 21.69.

This fragment of a jar preserves part of the rim and has a polished external surface. The letters *m* 𐩣 and *w* 𐩥 of the inscription are legible, but no context can be discerned. Shards, usually of pottery, with partial inscriptions are found in the Wādī Ḥaḍramawt in several areas. Their purpose is not known.

Parallels and Comparisons: For calcite-alabaster vessels with inscriptions, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania University Museum, 30.47.59, see Rycksmans (1935), pl. III.

Plate 52 Inscribed Stone Fragment

1st millennium BC–4th century AD. Limestone; H. 11.2 cm, W. 10 cm, D. 7 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster in the Wādī Ḥaḍramawt in 1962. Walters Art Museum, 21.70.

This fragment of a stone block is probably from a wall, as it is inscribed. The context cannot be reconstructed, but some of the letters are legible, such as *ḍ*, *m*, and *ᶜ*.

Plate 53 Inscribed Stone Block

20th century. Limestone; H. 6.4 cm, W. 10.6 cm, D. 4 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London) between 1963 and 1971. Walters Art Museum, 2007.17.49.

This rectangular block of stone with slightly irregular edges features one finished surface with two rows of inscription. The sides of the block are smoothed, and the back remains rough. The two-line inscription display is *boustrophedon*, meaning that it reads continuously from right to left then left to right. The text as written makes little sense, and one of the letters (immediately after the *ᶜayin* in the second line) does not appear to be old South Arabian; in fact, it does not appear to be a letter at all. Therefore, it is highly likely that this handy piece was produced in modern times.

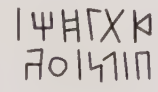
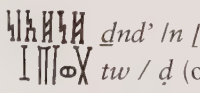


Plate 54 Inscribed Stone Block

Middle of 1st century AD. Limestone; H. 9 cm, W. 12 cm, D. 11 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster in Ta'izz (Yemen) from a local art dealer named Ahmed in 1962. Walters Art Museum, 21.46.

This irregularly-shaped fragment features two rows of inscription on its smoothed front side. In its present state it is impossible to determine whether this fragment originally belonged to a wall, a stela, or another monument. The inscription is difficult to interpret because of the missing letters. The remaining inscription reads:


ḏnd' /n [. . .]
tw / ḍ (or) *b? s[. . .]*

The second line is written with much larger letters than the first. A cautious parsing of the letters of the first line yields *ḏ-nḏ'*, which could be interpreted as a *Dhu-Nadha'*, a clan name. There is only one similar name known (*nḏ*), but with uncertain origin (Harding [1971], 585). The second line is so fragmentary that no attempt at its meaning is possible. The letters appear to be Qatabānean, and some of the paleographic aspects, such as the long shank of the *s* and the heavy *ḏ*, refer to inscriptions from the middle of the 1st century AD.

Plate 55a Pendant with Human Face

1st–5th century AD. Iron. H. 6.8 cm, W. 4 cm, D. 2.5 cm. Acquired in Ta'izz (Yemen) from an art dealer named Ahmed in 1961–62. Walters Art Museum, 52.312.

The slightly irregular oval plaque has an additional oval suspension. It features a human head in high relief with clearly defined facial features. The represented person is wearing an elaborate headdress that resembles the Macedonian *kausia*. The face finds its closest parallels in similar faces created in various materials throughout the Roman Empire, which are generally dated to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD (e.g., Jerusalem, The Borowski Collection R 37.) It is impossible to

determine whether this pendant reached South Arabia as an "import" or was locally made possibly as a funerary offering.

Parallels and Comparisons: For the style of the face, Jerusalem, The Borowski Collection, R 37, see Bernheimer (2007), 101.

Plate 55b Inscribed Oval Seal

6th–5th century BC. Chalcedony; H. 1.8 cm, W. 1.2 cm, D. 0.5 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster in Ta'izz (Yemen) from an art dealer named Ahmed in 1962. Walters Art Museum, 42.1512.

The well-preserved seal, possibly found in a grave, is carved from a piece of pale beige chalcedony, a popular material for South Arabian seals. The piece is pierced lengthwise to attach into a mount, which was probably a finger ring or amulet hung from the neck. Only the middle section of the seal is readable, and it may contain the following phrase:

l-B'n "Belonging to Ba'an."

The term *Ba'an* is unfamiliar, and the signs above and below it are unidentifiable. Although the past couple of years has witnessed many forgeries of comparable South Arabian seals in the international art market, the date of the purchase in the early 1960s makes forgery unlikely. It should be pointed out that such objects might carry magical inscriptions and, as such, are indecipherable.

Parallels and Comparisons: Vienna, Museum of Art History, Egyptian-Oriental Collection, Sem 1145, see Seipel (1998), 307, no. 205.

Plate 55c Gemstone with Birds

1st century AD. Chalcedony; H. 1.2 cm, W. 0.8 cm, D. 0.2 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster in Ta'izz (Yemen) from an art dealer named Ahmed in 1961. Walters Art Museum, 42.1513.

The lens-shaped gemstone is carved from light chalcedony. The image is of two birds, one of which sits on a basket-like nest. Both are well carved, and the composition is artistically conceived. The bird in the nest stands upright, with its head in the upper round of the oval field and its tail down. The larger bird is leaning forward, thereby elevating its tail feathers, and the length of its body fills the whole width of the oval. On the basis of parallels, the intaglio appears to have been created in a Greco-Roman workshop and then introduced into South Arabia where it may have become a burial offering.

Parallels and Comparisons: Berlin, Egyptian Museum, AM 4930, see Philipp (1986), 40, no. 26.

Plate 55d Head of a Small Bronze Bull

1st–2nd century AD. Bronze, solid cast; H. 2.4 cm, W. 2.7 cm, D. 2 cm. Acquired in Ta'izz (Yemen) by Dr. Foster from an art dealer named Ahmed in 1962. Walters Art Museum, 54.3031.

The small, corroded bronze head with short horns represents a bull's head. The head is broken off at its back, and it is impossible to ascertain whether it belonged to a larger figure or was attached to another bronze object. Such objects were often votive offerings deposited in temples or sanctuaries by worshipers, or buried with the deceased as an offering.

Parallels and Comparisons: London, Gimpel Fils (1970), no. 46 (former coll. J. Derevill, found at Timna'). Daum (1999), 114; London, The British Museum, ANE 135562, see Simpson (2002), 174, no. 224; New York, The Metropolitan Museum Rogers Fund, 47.100. 85, see https://www.metmuseum.org/Works_of_Art/collection_database/index.aspx?dep=3&vw=1&pld=1&kwd=47.100.85.

Plate 56 Plaque with Unusual Motif

2nd–1st century BC. Bronze; H. 17.8 cm, W. 10 cm, D. 0.5 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster in London in the flea market on Portobello Road, 1963–64. Walters Art Museum, 2007.17.35.

This elongated, octagonal plaque is in excellent condition. The main motif is an anthropoid figure with an elephant-like trunk, which in reality is either a long braid of hair or, more likely, a part of the headdress on the individual's head. The person is wearing a thigh-length costume and appears adorned with a necklace and anklets. This costume suggests that the person is male. The feet do not show toes, and it is likely that shoes are worn by the figure. The posture is upright; the figure's right arm is bent and the right hand rests on the hip, while the

left arm is extended toward a text box in front of his legs. A serpent is coiled in front of his face, and a bird with outspread wings is behind his shoulders.

A second human figure is oriented horizontally, with its head to the viewer's left and its outstretched legs pointing to the viewer's right. It appears to be enveloped in a long, sheet-like dress, suggesting that the figure is female. Her arms are across her chest, while the hands are either touching or interlocking in a gesture that is similar to other South Arabian figures with folded arms (pl. 26). Her eyes, nose, and mouth, as well as her hair framing her face, are well defined. The text box contains the name of a person:

Hšfr (or) *Hšqr*
Ṣrbn

The given name is known in the second variation (Harding [1971], 353), as well as the second name (Ḥarding [1971], 371). However, the letter forms are inconsistent and cannot be dated.

Considering the odd shape of the plaque, the images, and the unusual style of the script, the question of authenticity must be raised. However, the bird, which may be an eagle, and the serpent are familiar symbols in ancient South Arabia and can represent the sun and moon (e.g., Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, YM 269.) What appears as an unusual facial extension of the main figure can be explained as headgear (see Paris, Louvre AO 20893, and Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, YM 1131) used by hunters and traders, and the horizontal figure is similar to female figures of worshipers. The irregularities in the script may be attributed to technical problems. Therefore, an unusual composition such as this needs not be a forgery. Nevertheless, the corrosion was manipulated in modern times, perhaps because it has been stripped before, and an artificial patina was added.

Parallels and Comparisons: For eagle and serpent as symbols of sun and moon, Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, YM 269, see Costa (1978), 36, no. 67, pl. XVI, for the headgear, Paris, Louvre AO 20893, see Calvet/Robin (1997), 110, and Ṣana'ā', The Yemen National Museum, YM 1131, see Seipel (1999), 341, no. 294.

Plate 57 Ceramic Jar

1st century BC–1st century AD. Clay; H. 9 cm, D. (max.) 9 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster from Sotheby's (London), Monday, 19 October 1970, 19, lot 96. Walters Art Museum, 48.2784.

The small clay vessel has a high neck, a flat bottom, and a vertical ring-handle attached to the body. A dark-brown slip covers the smoothed surface which appears to have been fired under reducing conditions. Although such vessels were commonly used in daily life, they were also part of the funerary equipment.

Parallels and Comparisons: Lankester Harding (1964), pl. XLIII, n. 23; Doe (1971), pl. 30 (vessel on the right); De Maigret (2005), 82, pl. 91 d and e.

Plate 58 Lamp

Probably 19th or early 20th century. Calcite-Alabaster, H. 3.9 cm, D. 21.9 cm. Acquired by Dr. Foster in Ta'izz, Yemen, in 1962 from an art dealer named Ahmed. Walters Art Museum, 21.63.

This lamp is carved as one piece from translucent pale yellow calcite-alabaster that has two thin reddish brown veins. Pie-shaped in design, it has crimped siding. On the outside, between each crimping, are two incised lines. The bottom of the lamp inside is slightly irregular but polished, and in its center is a cone facing upwards that is drilled and capped by a brass-faceted finial ending with a hook by which the lamp was presumably hung. From the brass cap two thin strips of metal pass through the cone and are splayed on the lamp's bottom and fixed in place with a metallic solder. The bottom of the lamp is slightly convex. The condition of the lamp is good except for slight chipping on the top of the side edge. Saucer-shaped lamps like this are known since ancient times. They were filled with sesame or mustard oil and wicks were placed in the indentations of the rim. After the introduction of kerosene lamps towards the end of the 19th century, stone lamps like this one became increasingly unfashionable. However, they were still used until the early 20th century by Yemenite Jews as Sabbath lamps.

Parallels and Comparisons: Jerusalem, Israel Museum, R. 31.300253, see E. Muchawsky-Schnapper (1994), 118–19.

Bibliography

Albright (1958) — Albright, F. P. "Found in Mārib Excavations." In *Archaeological Discoveries in South Arabia*, ed. R. LeBaron Bowen, Jr., and F. P. Albright, 269–75. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Andrews (1994) — Andrews, C. *Amulets of Ancient Egypt*. London: British Museum Press.

Ansaldi (1933) — Ansaldi, C. *Il Yemen nella storia e nella leggenda.* Collezione di opere e di monografie a cura del Ministero delle Colonie 17. Rome: Ministero delle Colonie.

Antonini (1998) — Antonini, S. "South Arabian Antiquities in a Private Collection in Ar-Riyaḍ (Saudi Arabia)." *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 9, no. 2: 261–72.

Antonini (2001) — Antonini, S. *La statuaria Sudarabica in Pietra.* Repertorio iconographico sudarabico 1. Rome–Paris: Istituto italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente–Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres.

Avanzini (2004) — Avanzini, A. *Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions,* I–III, *Quatabanic, Marginal Quatabanic, Awsanite Inscriptions.* Pisa: Università di Pisa.

Avanzini (2005) — Avanzini, A. "Some Thoughts on Ibex on Plinths in Early South Arabian Art." *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 16, no. 2: 144–53.

Bernheimer (2007) — Bernheimer, G. M. *Ancient Gems from the Borowski Collection.* Ruhpolding, Germany: Rutzen.

Bounni (1988) — Bounni, A., and K. Al-Asa. *Palmyra: History, Monuments, and Museum*. Damascus [s.n].

Bowen (1958) — Bowen, R. LeBaron, Jr., and F. P. Albright, eds. *Archaeological Discoveries in South Arabia.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Bradbury (1996) — Bradbury, L. "Kpn-Boats, Punt Trade and a Lost Emporium." *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 33: 37–60.

Breton (1991) — Breton, J.-Fr. "Fouilles de Shabwa, 2: Rapports préliminaires." *Syria: Revue d'art oriental et d'archéologie* 68, fasc. 1–4: 1–462.

Breton (1999) — Breton, J.-Fr. *Arabia Felix from the Time of the Queen of Sheba: Eighth Century B.C. to First Century A.D.* Translated by A. Lafarge. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press.

Bron (1985) — Bron, F. "Deux statuettes qatabanites." *Semitica* 35: 97–98.

Bron (2000) — Bron, F. "Antiquités qatabanites (II)." *Semitica* 50: 230–32.

Bron (2006) — Bron, F. "Nouvelles antiquités qatabanites du British Museum." *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 17, no. 2: 190–200.

Calvet/Robin (1997) — Calvet, Y., and C. Robin. *Arabie heureuse–Arabie déserte: Les antiquités arabiques du Musée du Louvre*. Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux.

Caton Thompson (1944) — Caton Thompson, G. *Tombs and Moon Temple of Hureidha (Hadhramaut)*. Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London 13. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

CIAS I (1977) — *Corpus des Inscriptions et Antiquités Sud-arabes* 1, section 1: *Inscriptions*; section 2: *Antiquités*. Leuven: Éditions Peeters.

CIAS II (1986) — *Corpus des Inscriptions et Antiquités Sud-arabes* 2, section 1: *Le musée d'Aden, inscriptions*; section 2: *Le musée d'Aden*, antiquités. Leuven: Éditions Peeters.

Cleveland (1965) — Cleveland, R. L. *An Ancient South Arabian Necropolis: Objects from the Second Campaign (1951) in the Timna' Cemetery*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.

Costa (1978) — Costa, P. M. *The Pre-Islamic Antiquities at the Yemen National Museum*. Rome: L'erma di Bretschneider.

CSAI — Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions, see: Avanzini (2004) or http://csai.humnet.unipi.it.

Daum (1987) — Daum, W., ed. *Jemen. 3000 Jahre Kunst und Kultur des glücklichen Arabiens*.Innsbruck–Frankfurt am Main: Pinguin Verlag–Umschau Verlag.

Daum (1999) — Daum, W., W. W. Müller, N. Nebes, and W. Raunig, eds. *Im Land der Königin von Saba: Kunstschätze aus dem antiken Jemen.* Exh. cat. Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde München. Munich.

De Maigret (2005) — De Maigret, A., and S. Antonini. *South Arabian Necropolises: Italian Excavations at Al-Makhdarah and al-Ahjur (Republic of Yemen)*. Rome: Istituto italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente.

Diodorus Siculus — See: Oldfather (1935).

Doe (1965) — Doe, D. B. *Aden in History.* Aden: Aden: The Government Printer.

Doe (1971) — Doe, D. B. *Southern Arabia*. London: Thames & Hudson.

Doe (1983) — Doe, D. B. *Monuments of South Arabia*. Cambridge–New York: Oleander.

Erdemgil (1989) — Erdemgil, S. *Ephesus: Ruins and Museum*. Istanbul: NET, Turistik Yaınlar.

Fakhry (1951–52) — Fakhry, A. *An Archaeological Journey to Yemen.* 3 vols. Cairo: Government Press.

Gabra (1993) — Gabra, G. *Cairo: The Coptic Museum and Old Churches.* Cairo: Egyptian International Pub. Co., Longman.

Germer (1980) — Germer, R. "Myrrhe." In *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* IV, ed. W. Helck and E. Otto, 275–76. Weisbaden: Harrassowitz.

Gimpel Fils (1970) — Gimpel Fils Gallery. *Sculpture from South Arabia*. Exh. cat. Gimpel Fils Gallery. London.

Grohmann (1914) — Grohmann, A. *Göttersymbole und Symboltiere auf Südarabischen Denkmälern*. Vienna: Alfred Hölder.

Grohmann (1935) — Grohmann, A. "Kulturgeschichte des Alten Orients." In *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft* 3, Abt. 1.T. Munich: C. H. Beck.

Groom (1981) — Groom, N. *Frankincense and Myrrh. A Study of the Arabian Incense Trade.* London and Beirut: Longman–Librairie du Liban.

Groom (1995) — Groom, N. "The Periplus, Pliny and Arabia." *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 6: 184–85.

Gunter (2005) — Gunter, A., ed. *Caravan Kingdoms: Yemen and the Ancient Incense Trade*. Exh. cat. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. Washington.

Hamdānī — See: Müller (1899).

Harding (1971) — Harding, G. L. *An Index and Concordance of Pre-Islamic Arabian Names and Inscriptions*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Hauptmann v. Gladiss (1979) — Hauptmann v. Gladiss, A. "Probleme altsüdarabischer Plastik." *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 10: 145–57.

Herodotus — See: Selingcourt (1954).

Hort (1916) — Hort, A., trans. *Theophrastus: "Enquiry into Plants."* Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Hoyland (2001) — Hoyland, G. R. *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*. London–New York: Routledge.

Jamme (1955) — Jamme, A. "Pièces qatabanites et sabéennes d'Aden." *Anadolu Arastirmalari* 1: 117–26.

Jamme (1956) — Jamme, A. "Les antiquités sud-arabes du Museo Nazionale Romano." *Monumenti antichi* 43: 110–19.

Jamme (1971) — Jamme, A. *Miscellanées d'ancien arabe* II. Washington, D.C.: Privately printed.

Jamme (1976) — Jamme, A. *Yemen Expedition, Carnegie Museum, 1974–75.* Special Publications of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, 2. Pittsburgh.

Jones (1930) — Jones, H. L., trans. *The Geography of Strabo.* Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Kitchen (1993) — Kitchen, K. A. "The Land of Punt." In *The Archaeology of Africa. Food Metals and Towns*, ed. T. Shaw et al., 587–609. London–New York: Routledge.

Kitchen (1994) — Kitchen, K. A. "The Lady Di'amat and Friends from Wadi Beihan, S. Arabia." *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 5, no. 3: 169–73.

Lankester Harding (1964) — Lankester Harding, G. *Archaeology in the Aden Protectorates.* London: H. M. Stationery Office.

Lawton (1983) — Lawton, J. "Frankincense." *Saudi Aramco World,* May/June: 26–27.

Legrain (1934) — Legrain, L. "In the Land of the Queen of Sheba." *American Journal of Archaeology* 38: 329–37.

Mandel (1976) — Mandel, G. *Il regno di Saba: Ultimo paradiso archaeologico.* Milan: Longanesi.

Markoe (2002) — Markoe, G. E. *Phoenicians.* London: British Museum Press.

Merhav (1981) — Merhav, R. *Glimpse into the Past: The Joseph Ternbach Collection.* Jerusalem: Israel Museum.

Mordtmann (1893) — Mordtmann, J. H. *Himjaritische Inschriften und Altertümer in den Königlichen Museen zu Berlin.* Mittheilungen aus den Orientalischen Sammlungen 7. Berlin: W. Spemann.

Muchawsky-Schnapper (1994) — Muchawsky-Schnapper, E. *The Jews of Yemen. Highlights of the Israel Museum Collection.* Jerusalem: Israel Museum.

Müller (1899) — Müller, D. H. *Südarabische Alterthümer in Kunsthistorischen Hofmuseum.* Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Hofmuseum.

Müller (1973) — Müller, W. W. "Eine neuerworbene qatabānische Reliefstele mit Inschrift." *Tribus* 22: 49–53.

Nebes (1992) — Nebes, N. "New Inscriptions from the Bar'ān Temple (al-'Amā'd) in the Oasis Mārib." In *Contacts between Cultures. West Asia and North Africa* I, ed. A. Harrak, 160–164. Lewinston–Lampeter: E. Mellen Press.

Nicholson (2000) — Nicholson, T. P., and I. Shaw. *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Technology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Oldfather (1935) — Oldfather, C. H., trans. *Diodoris (Diodorus Siculus).* Loeb Classical Library. London and Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Osborn (1998) — Osborn, D. J. *The Mammals of Ancient Egypt.* In collaboration with J. Osbornová. Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips.

Philipp (1986) — Philipp, H. *Mira et Magica: Gemmen im Ägyptischen Museum der Staatlichen Museen–Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin–Charlottenburg.* Mainz: P. von Zabern.

Phillips (1955) — Phillips, W. *Qataban and Sheba. Exploring Ancient Kingdoms on the Biblical Spice Routes of Arabia.* New York: Harcourt, Brace.

Pirenne (1957) — Pirenne, J. "Le rinceau dans l'evolution de l'art sud-arabe." *Syria: Revue d'art oriental et d'archéologie* 34: 103–8.

Pirenne (1960) — Pirenne, J. "Notes d'archéologie sud-arabe, 1: Stèles à la déese Dhat Himyam." *Syria: Revue d'art oriental et d'archéologie* 37: 326–46.

Pirenne (1961) — Pirenne, J. "Notes d'archéologie sud-arabe, 2: La statuette d'un roi de Awsān et l'hellénisation dans la statuaire sud-arabe." *Syria: Revue d'art oriental et d'archéologie* 38: 327–47.

Pirenne (1962) — Pirenne, J. "Notes d'archéologie sud-arabe, 3: Stèles à la déesse du musée d'Aden." *Syria: Revue d'art oriental et d'archéologie* 39: 257–62.

Pliny — See: Rackham (1954).

Rackham (1954) — Rackham, H., trans. *Pliny's Natural History*. Loeb Classical Library. London and Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Radike (2006) — Radike, M. "Linking Ancient Civilizations of the Fabled Sabaean Kingdoms. A Rushed Rescue Excavation and a Sensational Discovery." *ARABIA Felix* June 1, 2006, see: http://www.arabia-felix.com/arabia-felix-74.

Radt (1973) — Radt, W. *Katalog der Staatlichen Antikensammlung von Sana und anderen Antiken im Jemen*. Berlin: Wasmuth.

Rathjens (1955) — Rathjens, C. *Sabaeica*, 2: *Die unlokalisierten Funde*. Mitteilungen aus dem Museum für Völkerkunde in Hamburg 25. Hamburg: Kommissionsverlag L. Appel.

Retsö (1991) — Retsö, J. "The Domestication of the Camel and the Establishment of the Frankincense Road from South Arabia." *Orientalia Suecana* XL: 187–219.

Robin (1997) — Robin, C. J. *Yémen: Au pays de la reine de Saba.* Exh. cat. Institut du Monde Arabe. Paris: Flammarion.

Rossini (1926–1927) — Rossini, C. C. "Dale Rovine di Ausān." *Dedalo: Rassegna d'arte* 7: 727–54.

Rycksmans (1935) — Rycksmans, G. Inscriptions sud-arabe, 3e série." In *Le Muséon* 48: 1-187.

Sartre (2001) — Sartre, M. *D'Alexandre à Zénobie.* Paris: Fayard.

Schippmann (2001) — Schippmann, K. *Ancient South Arabia: From the Queen of Sheba to the Advent of Islam.* Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener Publishers.

Schmidt (1987) — Schmidt, J. "Die sabäische Wasserwirtschaft von Marib." In *Jemen: 3000 Jahre Kunst und Kultur des glücklichen Arabiens*, ed. W. Daum. Innsbruck–Frankfurt am Main: Pinguin Verlag–Umschau Verlag.

Seipel (1998) — Seipel, W., ed. *Jemen: Kunst und Archäologie im Land der Königin von Saba.* Exh. cat. Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien. Vienna–Milan: Kunsthistorisches Museum–Skira.

Selingcourt (1954) — Selingcourt, A. de, trans. *Herodotus: The Histories.* Loeb Classical Library. London and Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Sethe (1904) — Sethe, K. *Urkunden des Alten Reiches.*Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs.

Seyrig (1934) — Seyrig, H. "Antiquités syrienne." *Syria: Revue d'art oriental et d'archéologie* 15: 155–86.

Simeone-Senelle (1994) — Simeone-Senelle, M.-C. "Aloe and Dragon's Blood, Some Medicinal and Traditional Uses on the Island of Socotra." *New Arabian Studies* 2: 186–98.

Simpson (2002) — Simpson, St. John, ed. *Queen of Sheba. Treasures from Ancient Yemen.* Exh. cat. British Museum. London.

Strabo — See: Jones (1930).

Theophrastus — See: Hort (1916).

Wissmann (1964) — Wissmann, H. *Zur Geschichte und Landeskunde von Alt-Südarabien.* Sammlung Eduard Glaser, Nr. III = Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Sitzungsberichte 246. Vienna.

Wissmann (1982) — Wissmann, H. *Die Geschichte von Saba'*, 2: *Das Grossreich der Sabäer bis zu seinem Ende im frühen 4. Jh. v. Chr.* Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Sitzungsberichte 402. Vienna.

The Dromedary

Regine Schulz

Juvenile dromedaries. One still sees camel markets in the Wādī Ḥaḍramawt today with several hundred animals.

Camels, or, more specifically, one-hump dromedaries, made possible the long-distance caravan trade in ancient Arabia. Wild dromedaries were indigenous to the Arabian Peninsula and were hunted in prehistoric times for their meat. Domestication began as early as the 3rd millennium BC in the southeast of the Arabian Peninsula. Animals were originally kept for their milk, flesh, hair, and dung, the latter being burned for heat and cooking. Their use for riding and transportation, particularly for the long-distance trade, is not documented before the late 2nd millennium BC. The pastoral tribes likely learned at this time about the extraordinary endurance of the camel, which can survive without water for as long as four weeks and can carry loads up to 150 pounds.

In the north at the end of the 2nd millennium BC, according to the Bible, Midianites came "with their tents, and . . . their camels were numerous" (Judges 6:5). By the 1st millennium BC, dromedaries became important not only for the conveyance of trade goods, but also for military operations. Dromedary-rider corps are mentioned from the 9th century BC, when a troop of 1,000 dromedaries took part in the battle of Qarqar in 853 BC in what is present-day Syria; the geographer and historian Agatharchides of Knidos (ca. 200–120 BC) reported that the Dabae nomads "fight against their enemies from their [dromedaries'] backs, employ them for the conveyance of their wares . . . , drink their milk . . . , and traverse their entire country riding upon their backs" (Agatharchides of Knidos, 200–120 BC, in Diodorus Siculus III, 45, see Oldfather, 1935). The first graphic representation of a dromedary-rider appears on a 10th century BC bas relief from Tell Halaf in present day Syria (Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, 21.15).

In South Arabia dromedary figures made of clay or bronze were placed in tombs, and real dromedaries were sacrificed and buried with high-ranking persons. Dromedary figurines have also been found in temples dedicated to Sayīn at Shabwa and to dhāt-Ḥimyam at Raybūn and inscriptions mention camel-shaped votives or amulets for bringing health and well-being. Bas reliefs of dromedary riders appear on South Arabian ritual objects: for example, a dromedary rider is depicted on an altar in the British Museum (WA 125682), and on two funerary stelae in the Louvre (AO 1029 and 1128). Whether the rider is the donor of the object or the owner of the animal is not known.

The Dam—The Wonder of Mārib

Regine Schulz

The great dam in the Wadi Dhanā near Marib. Control of water both to irrigate land and prevent destruction was the outstanding problem the South Arabia Kingdoms faced.

Water irrigation systems were essential for wadi and oasis agriculture in ancient South Arabia. The development of these systems began as early as the third millennium BC with water distribution channels in Mārib, and culminated with the great dam of Mārib in the Wādī Dhana. The dam was constructed during the second half of the 6th century BC and was built between two massive limestone cliffs. It was approximately 2,000 feet long, with a base thickness of 200 feet and a maximum height of 60 feet, and was built of mud covered with stones and mortar. Sluices were cut into the top of the two cliffs to regulate water flow into distribution channels. The dam was constructed not only to create a reservoir, but also to control floodwaters during the rainy season, when water flow could exceed 60,000 cubic feet per second. To control the water, massive stone blocks were used to stabilize the sluice gates.

The construction was a masterpiece of engineering, and the dam functioned for nearly 1,200 years. By controlling the water supply, the Sabaeans enlarged the area under cultivation to 26,300 acres (11,780 in the Southern Oasis, and 14,520 in the Northern Oasis). The dam needed constant maintenance, and there was always the concern that it would break—which it did several times. One text reports that, after one such break, King Shurah bi'īll Ya'fūr mustered 20,000 workers to effect repairs. Transportation, food, and religious rituals for the undertaking required 14,600 camels, 200,000 sheep, 217,000 pounds of flour and dates, 1,360 sacrificial animals, 1,100 sacrificial lambs, 430 camel loads of grapes, and 200 loads of dates. Despite all efforts the dam broke again the following year. Its final destruction took place in the early 7th century AD, an event that was reported in the Qur'ān (Chapter 34, 15–16): "Certainly there was a sign for Saba' in their abode—two gardens on the right and the left....But they turned aside, so We sent upon them a violent torrent, and in place of their two gardens We gave them two gardens yielding bitter fruit and (growing) tamarisk and a few lote-trees."

Although the Mārib dam is the most well known in Ancient Arabia, there have been other impressive water regulation systems, for example those near Mayfa'a in the Wādī Sayl or Barāgish in the Wādī Maijzir. In their execution, all these hydraulic projects rival those of their more famous counterparts in Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Tower-houses

Regine Schulz

Tower houses in Ṣana'ā'. Built to conserve land for agriculture, tower houses also provided protection against floods and enemy attack.

Tower-houses were part of urban planning in many South Arabian cities. Designed originally to conserve fertile ground for agriculture, they provided protection against floodwaters and enemy attack and for these reasons were usually built on high ground. Most had a rectangular floor plan. The ground floor was sturdily constructed of large, heavy stones and featured a small entranceway. In place of windows on this floor were small slits or holes to admit light; the higher stories had small windows and on the roof there was an open terrace.

Tower-houses varied in height and taller ones served as fortresses. Even farmhouses could have several floors. However, no archaeological evidence remains to testify to their height. This is because few tower-houses were built of stone: most were built of clay and have not survived. In some regions, for example in Shabwa, the South Arabians used wood to costruct the upper floors, which they combined with clay-bricks or lumps of clay. Over the centuries such buildings have collapsed and only a hill of rubble remains. What does remain are inscriptions that describe six-story buildings and reliefs that confirm this height.

While tower-houses have sporadically been built in other ancient cultures, those in South Arabia were far more ubiquitous, and the tradition survives today. The two cities in Yemen, which best preserve the tradition, are Ṣana'ā', the capital of Yemen, and Shibām in the Ḥaḍramawt region. Both are on the UNESCO world heritage list.

Script and Languages of Ancient South Arabia

Regine Schulz

Alphabet used for the South Arabian languages spoken until the 7th century AD.

At least five different Semitic languages were used in the ancient South Arabian kingdoms. All, however, shared a common alphabetic script, which Islamic scholars have called *Musnad.* The Southern Arabian alphabet used twenty-nine letters, which is one more than the Northern Arabian and seven more than the Phoenician. Capital letters were used for all monumental inscriptions on stone, rock, or bronze, and cursive signs were used for letters and administrative documents written on wood or palm stalks. Both appear as graffiti, mostly on rocks, along the caravan routes.

Some of the earliest documents were written from right to left on the first line, then left to right on the second, and continuing on in alternating directions in so-called *Boustrophedon,* which literally means "turning like oxen in plowing." After the 4th century BC the right to left direction became obligatory. A vertical line between each word helps with reading. This script was likely developed not in South Arabia but in the Near East at the end of the 2nd millennium BC, probably at the same time as the Phoenician alphabet. It is therefore one of the world's oldest scripts—a contention that is supported by tablets found in Beth Shemesh in southern Palestine and Ras Shamra (ancient Ugarit). These contain an alphabet with the South Arabian letter sequence and South Arabian script. *Musnad* was used in South Arabia itself probably from the 9th or 8th century BC to the mid sixth century AD. During this period the writing style changed, and variations were introduced in different regions. These variations, especially the size and shape of letters, have helped to date South Arabian texts.

The *Musnad* script used consonants for most but not all South Arabian languages; the Sabaean language has three long vowels: ī, ū, and ō/ē in the last syllable (transcribed with *y* or *w*). Most of the sounds are similar to Arabic, but *Musnad* has three sibilants: besides "s" (s^1) and "sh" (s^2) or (š), there is a third "s" (s^3) sound. The only derived script of the South Arabian is Ethiopian. The first texts in Ethiopian date to the 7th or 6th century BC and were written by Sabaean colonists in the Sabaean language. Later Ethiopians used this script to write their own language, modifying the letters with special adjuncts to indicate vowels. Interestingly, these vowel sounds have played a formative role in teaching us which vowels are missing from various texts; as a result, we can now read inscriptions in South Arabian languages that could not be read before.

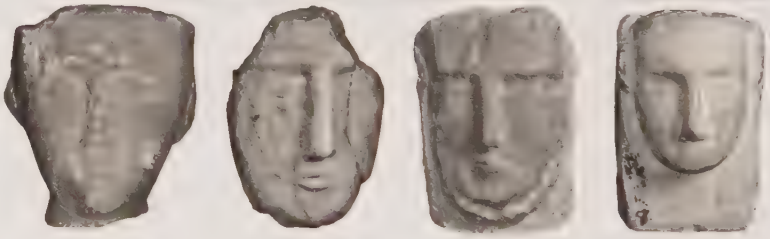
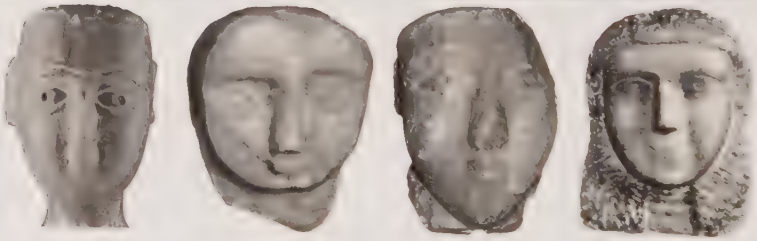
The sequence of the South Arabian alphabet differs from all other alphabets, including Phoenician, Aramaic, Greek, Latin, and Arabic, which have all developed from the Ugaritic sequence.

More than ten thousand inscriptions have been discovered in Yemen, and a few more have been found in trading stations in Ethiopia and Oman, and along the eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula. Minaean inscriptions have been found in extraordinary places such as on a coffin in Egypt and in a dedicatory text on the Greek island of Delos. (Understanding inscriptions found in foreign countries is not always easy, because words and their meaning may differ.)

The principal South Arabian languages that we can identify from inscriptions are Minaic (or Madhabaic), Sabaic, Qatabānic, and Ḥaḍramitic; the later Ḥimyaritic used an adapted version of Sabaic as their official written language. Although the languages are related to one another, none was universally understood in ancient times.

Of the several categories of inscriptions, the most common are dedications, funerary inscriptions, and reports on building and agricultural projects that secure rights of possession. Inscriptions were expensive, and few people could afford to commission them. Less common are official inscriptions related to government policies, regulation of trade, taxes, and, rarer still, war and treaties. The only identified treaty inscription is on the wall of the temple at Ṣirwāḥ; it reports the successful campaigns of the Sabaean ruler Karib' īl Watār (Karib' the Great), son of Dhamar 'Ālī, who conquered large parts of Yemen in the early seventh century BC.

Types of Sculpted Heads and Head-Stelae

Type	Characteristics	Location	Period	Examples
Type I	Flat head-stelae; highly stylized, triangular faces; features in raised relief, additional elements incised; straight supra-orbital ridges continuous with nose to form a T.	Timna' and Mārib.	Formative and early Classical Period (6th–3rd century BC).	Plate 1
Type II	Heads with three-dimensional sculpted faces; inlaid eyes and brows; long, slim noses and small mouths; female heads with long necks.	Timna'.	Classical Period (4th century BC–AD 1st century).	Plate 3 Plate 4
Type III	Heads and head-stelae; originally probably with painted eyes; some subtypes have incised and others raised contour lines, or no eye details at all.	Mārib and the Jawf region.	Formative and Classical Period (7th–1st century BC).	 Plate 7 Plate 16 Plate 17 Plate 18
Type IV	Heads and head stelae; incised eyes and eyebrows, and drilled holes for the pupils, which were likely inlaid or filled with paint.	Timna' and Mārib.	Classical Period (3rd century BC–AD 1st century).	 Plate 20 Plate 21 Plate 22 Plate 27

Southern Arabia Funerary Heads

Regine Schulz

Ancient South Arabian sculptured funerary heads and heads carved on stelae vary widely; in fact, no two are the same. Hitherto this variance has precluded ready recognition of both provenience and workshop within provenance. However, a working familiarity of those heads in a number of collections whose provenance is reasonably well established has made it possible to recognize some specific stylistic characteristics and fabricating techniques common to specific types. Four are presented here, drawn upon examples in the present collection to illustrate them.

Type I
This type is the earliest. They are always head-stelae, dating to between the 6th and 3rd centuries BC; all have highly stylized flattish faces with features in raised relief that present an overall nearly two dimensional abstract image. The details of some of the subordinated elements are chiseled into the surface. The artists attained a balance of details by the symmetrical layout of isolated components against an almost flat background. Eyebrows, eyes, nose, and mouth are raised and in this way are individually emphasized (pl. 1). Stelae of this type are known from Timna' as well as Mārib, but some may also come from other regions as well.

Type II
From the 5th–4th century BC plastically modeled heads progressively replace two-dimensional images. Some of these heads, especially those from Qatabān, have inlaid eyes and eyebrows, whose color contrasts with the pale beige tone of the calcite-alabaster. Such heads were common from the 4th century BC–AD 1st century. In most instances, the inlays are lost (pl. 2–5), but in well-preserved examples eyes or parts of eyes are made of seashell, lapis lazuli, obsidian, carnelian, or glass. The contrasting color draws attention to the eyes and suggests an intense interaction with the ritualist.
The noses are slim and long; most nostrils are not hollowed; or partially hollowed, the mouths are very small; and the necks are long.

Type III
Beside the heads with inlaid eyes there are various heads and head-stelae that have no pupils, only eyes convexly shaped, smoothly sculptured, and without detail. These were common from the 7th–1st century BC. The contour lines of the slightly protruding eyes are carved, incised, or rimmed; probably they and their eyebrows were painted originally. The noses are less prominent and have partially hollowed nostrils; the shape and width of the mouth varies; and the mouth occasionally suggests a smile. Sculptures with these characteristics have different origins, but those with rimmed eyes are more likely to have been produced in Qatabān and those with, irregularly, incised outlined eyes are more likely made in a Sabaean or Jawf region workshop (pl. 6–8, 10–11, 13–16).

A subgroup of these heads have no modeled or incised eyes or eyebrows at all; these may have been executed with paint. The refined modeling of the face is characteristic of work from the Jawf area from the Formative Period through early Classical Period (ca. 6th – 4th centuries BC; see pl. 17, 18).

Type IV
Heads and heads on stela of this type have large, incised, eyes and eyebrows, and drilled holes for the pupils. These are found in different South Arabian sites, and commonly date from the 3rd century BC–AD 1st century. Colorful inlays of paint originally filled the deeply incised contours and drill-holes. There are two variants of the eyes: one has incised contour lines around them (pl. 19, 22, 24, 25, 27); the other has rims in addition (pl. 20, 21, 23, 26).

While few heads still have inlays or paint, it should be remembered that originally most were impressively colorful.

Chronology Chart

Timeline	Cultural Changes	Achievements	Historical Events
5000–8000 BC Neolithic Period			
4000 BC		First pottery.	
3000 BC		First irrigation systems.	
2500 BC		First sculptures.	*Pyramid of King Khufu, (c. 2555 BC).*
Beginning of Bronze Age	Ṣabir culture.	Increasing of trade.	
2000 BC		Appearance of monolithic stone stelae.	*King Hammurabi's law (c. 1770 BC).*
1500 BC	Proto-Ḥaḍramawt culture.		Queen Hatshepsut's expedition to Punt (1470 BC)
1200 BC	Immigration of Semitic speaking groups from the Near East. Proto-Sabaean culture.	First inscriptions.	
1000 BC	First dromedary caravans.		Queen of Sheba (Saba') visits Solomon (c. 950 BC)
800 BC	Mukarrib period in Saba' with capital in Mārib. Probable formation of the South Arabian Kingdoms: Ma'īn, Qatabān, Awsān, and Ḥaḍramawt, and several smaller kingdoms in the Jawf region.	Development of advanced agriculture and irrigation systems. First temple buildings. Expansion of the caravan trade route ("Incense Route").	Sabaean colonies in Ethiopia. Conflict between the Assyrian governor of Suchu and Mari and a caravan from Saba' and Timna' (c. 750 BC). *Founding of Rome (753 BC).* Yitha'amar of Saba' pays tributes to the Assyrian king Sargon II (715 BC).
700 BC	Destruction of the Kingdom of Awsān by the Sabaean king Karib'īl Watār (c. 680 BC).	Cities with fortifications. First wall built around Mārib. Yada''il Dhārih builts three temples for 'Almaqah (c. 665 BC).	Karib'īl of Saba' pays tributes to Assyrian king Sanherib (685 BC).
550 BC		High dam at Mārib built.	
400 BC	Independence of Ma'īn and of Qatabān from Saba'. Independence of the Ḥaḍramawt.	Minting of coins in Saba'.	*Death of Alexander the Great, King of Macedonia and founder of the Hellenistic Empire (323 BC).*
300 BC	Destruction of Ma'īn and most of Qatabān.		Nabataeans gain power in the international trade.
115 BC	Rise of the Kingdom of Ḥimyar with its new capital Ẓafār.		

Timeline	Administrative Changes	Achievements	Historical Events
100 BC		Discovery of the Monsoon winds, increase in ocean trade.	Aelius Gallus (Roman Prefect of Egypt) tries unsuccessful to conquer South Arabia (25 BC). *Birth of Jesus of Nazareth, founder of Christianity (c. 6 BC).*
20 AD	Ḥimyar conquers part of Saba'.		
100 AD	Ḥaḍramawt annexes the rests of Qatabān.		
200 AD	Hamdān dynasty in Mārib; alliance with the Ethiopians under King 'Alhan Nahfan.Wars of the Saba-Ḥimyaritic Kingdom against Ethiopia and Ḥaḍramawt. Mārib loses political influence, but keeps religious authority.	Greco-Roman influence in South Arabian culture.	Shammar Yuhar'ish sends a delegation to the Sasanian court (AD 297).
300 AD	The Ḥimyaritic ruler Shammar Yuhar'īsh conquers Ḥaḍramawt; the new capital is Shibām.		
400 AD	Ḥaḍramawt tries to librate itself. The Abyssinian king 'Ēzānā occupies parts of South Arabia. Consolidation of the Saba-Ḥimyaritic empire; the last strong king is Abākarib As'ad.	End of polytheism in South Arabia; the god Raḥmānān replaces the other deities.	The Roman emperor Constantius II sends Christian missionaries to Ẓafār (ca. AD 345).
516 AD	King Ya'fur fights against the Bedouins in Central Arabia.		
517–25 AD	The Jewish king Yūsūf As'ar Yath'ar fights Christians and Abyssinians in South Arabia.		
525 AD	The Ethiopians under King Ella Aṣbāḥā conquer South Arabia.		
530-70 AD	Abrehā, the Ethiopian vassal king in South Arabia attacks Makka Occupation of the Ḥaḍramawt by the Kinda dynasty.		Rise of the Kinda dynasty in Central Arabia.
570 AD	The Ethiopians are forced to leave South Arabia.		*Birth of Mohamed, Prophet of Islam (ca. AD 570).*
575 AD	Final break of the dam of Mārib.		
597/8 AD	South Arabia becomes a province of the Sasanian empire.		
630 AD	Al-Muhadjir becomes first governor of the province al-Yaman of the Muslim empire.	Introduction of Islam.	

Published by Man and Lion Press,
Baltimore, Maryland

Designed by Nathan Garland,
New Haven, Connecticut

Printed by Finlay,
Bloomfield, Connecticut

Set in Times New Roman,
the classic typeface designed
by Stanley Morison for
The Times of London, in 1932

Collection photographed
by Norman Barker,
Baltimore, Maryland

W7-CAW-888

ISBN 0-9747356-2-